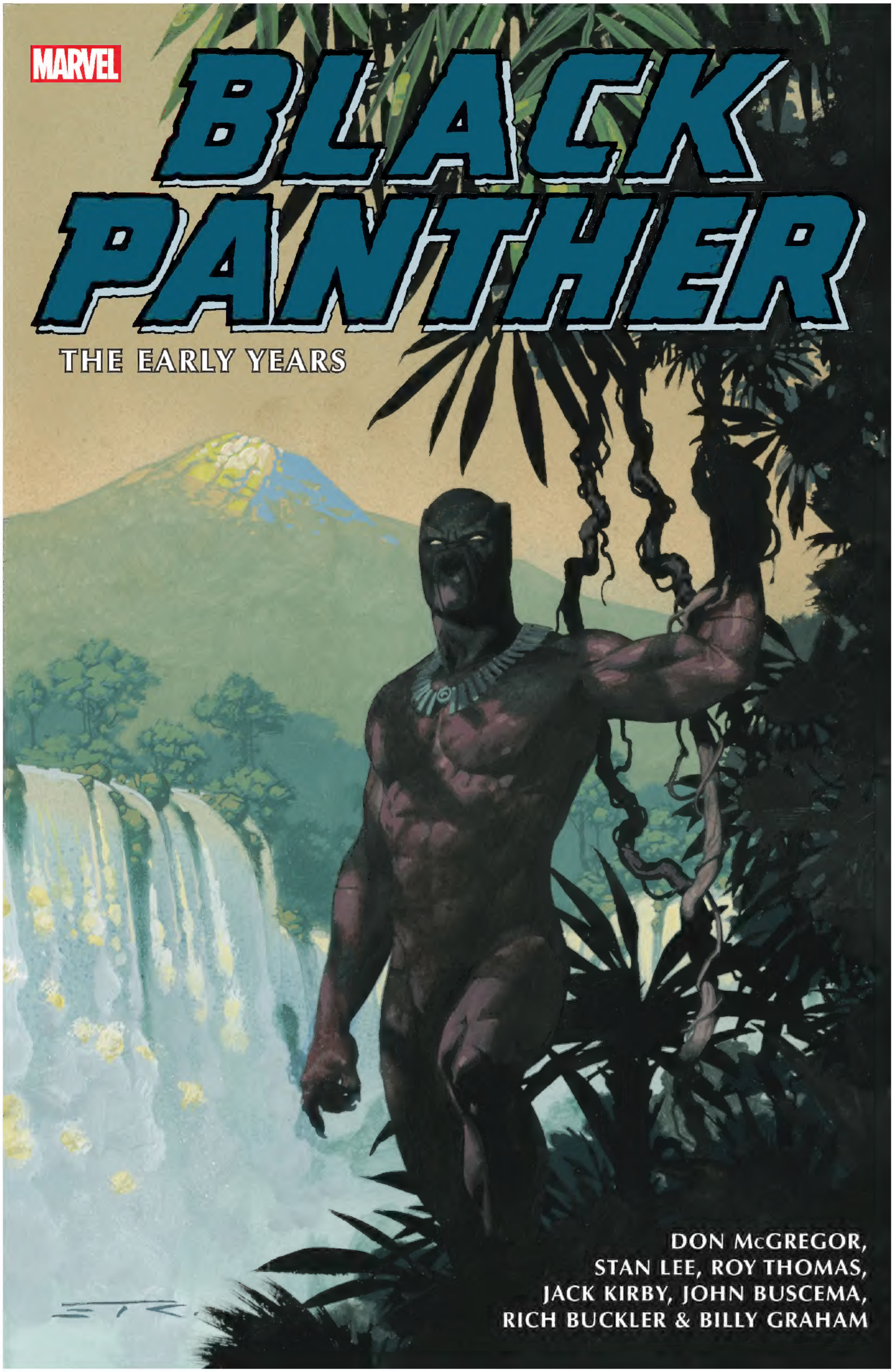
MARVEL
BLACK PANTHER
THE EARLY YEARS
DON McGREGOR,
STAN LEE, ROY THOMAS,
JACK KIRBY, JOHN BUSCEMA,
RICH BUCKLER & BILLY GRAHAM

BLACK PANTHER
THE EARLY YEARS

COLLECTING

THE FANTASTIC FOUR Nos. 52-54, 56 & 119, *TALES OF SUSPENSE* Nos. 97-99,
CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 100, *THE AVENGERS* Nos. 52, 62, 73-74, 77-79, 87, 112 & 126,
DAREDEVIL Nos. 52, 69 & *ANNUAL* No. 4, *ASTONISHING TALES* Nos. 6-7,
MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 20 & *JUNGLE ACTION* Nos. 6-24

STAN LEE, ROY THOMAS, DON McGREGOR,
JACK KIRBY, JOHN BUSCEMA,
RICH BUCKLER & BILLY GRAHAM

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BLACK PANTHER
THE EARLY YEARS
OMNIBUS

COLLECTING

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BLACK PANTHER CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

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THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF BLACK PANTHER FANS

BY JESSE J. HOLLAND

While there are millions of Black Panther fans out there who thrill to the adventures of the protector of Wakanda, you may be surprised to find out that not all of us actually get along.

Oh, we all love T'Challa. We all would pick up and move to Wakanda in a heartbeat. We all adore Shuri and the Dora Milaje and Killmonger and Bast and the incredible mythology that makes the Black Panther an enduring icon for children and adults around the world.

With the Panther, we found a hero that reminded us that anyone can be a champion, that power is not confined to place of birth and that anyone—no matter their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality or religion—can be a hero.

But there's this divide, this estrangement, between Black Panther fans that pops up every once in a while at comic book conventions, in bookstores, in movie theatres and in places where fans of comic books, movies and television gather.

You see, there are three kinds of Black Panther fans: Those of us who learned of him through the character's comic book adventures, starting with his first appearance in *Fantastic Four* #52 in 1966; those who learned of him through the various television properties, like BET's *Black Panther* stop-motion cartoon and Marvel's *Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* cartoon; and those who came to the Panther through the Marvel Cinematic Universe's *Captain America: Civil War*, the blockbuster movie *Black Panther* and the subsequent Avenger movies, *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*.

And surprise, surprise, not all of us Wakandaphiles get along.

I don't mean to suggest there's a rivalry like the one between Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, the left and the right side of the Twix bars, or between the cool side and the warm side of the pillow, but there's definitely a thing going on here between those who discovered the Panther in different parts of his existence.

And to be honest, when it comes to the Panther, it's not them, the TV and movie fans, who have the problem. It's us: the comic book fans.

We feel a particular possessiveness when it comes to the character, a particular jealousy when we sit and listen to those who only just discovered the Panther espouse their limited knowledge of Wakanda and its denizens based on what they've gleaned from a few hints on the TV shows, or from the couple of hours they saw inside a movie theater.

While we comic book fans know and acknowledge the T'Challas and Wakandas that exist in the cartoons and in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (and agree that the casting of the late great Chadwick Boseman was superb), we are smug in our superior knowledge that the legends are so much more than can be told on television, and of our grander awareness of what the Black Panther is, what the Black Panther means, where the Black Panther has been and where the Black Panther is going because of our longtime obsession with the character that has prowled the comic books for so long.

The T'Challa we know, the T'Challa we grew up with, the T'Challa we admire is a consummate planner, a technological genius, an unconquerable warrior, a compassionate monarch, a faithful confidant and a philanthropic billionaire. He is everything, and yet still unique.

In our eyes, if you didn't know the T'Challa who existed in the comic books, you knew a lesser T'Challa.

We sit back and laugh at the so-called experts who tried to use their knowledge of T'Challa from the movies to tell the world what Wakanda means and the cultural impact of the character. This is because unless you've read the comic books, you don't know T'Challa the way we do.

The other fans don't know of his struggles with his relationships with women, including the lovely Monica Lynne, and with the prejudice from his own people when it became time for them to accept an American as someone close to T'Challa's heart. They don't know about the true queen of Wakanda, Ororo, and her star-crossed romance with T'Challa and the forces that would not allow them to stay together.

We comic book fans chortled when so-called Wakandan "authorities" waxed on poetically about the strength of Ramonda as T'Challa's mother, never even once mentioning N'Yami, his *real* mother and the intelligence and scientific knowledge that T'Challa inherited her from her.

They weren't there with us as T'Challa searched for Ramonda to bring her home to Wakanda after her kidnapping and subsequent imprisonment for many years, and they didn't shed tears of joy when he fought his way through a hostile country to reunite with the only mother he could remember.

We were the ones who were truly scared when we found out that Killmonger was the villain, because we knew that he was the one man T'Challa had never truly beaten. We were afraid when we realized that the battle in the Black Panther movie was happening on the side of a cliff similar to the one in *Jungle Action* #6, because we already knew how that battle ended. (And while we cheered the casting of Michael B. Jordan as Killmonger, and marveled at his nuanced and powerful performance, we are still holding out for the Rick James-esque, jheri-curled Killmonger look that so defines him in the comic books!)

There is so much more to T'Challa, Wakanda and the Black Panther mythology than what people have seen on television and in movies. That's why this collection exists: to bring to the world the T'Challa we've always known, the true T'Challa all of the rest were based on, T'Challa as he was first envisioned, the T'Challa that evolved through the fires of his creators' intellects until he came out the other side honed as not just our hero in the comic book medium but a cultural phenomenon known the world over.

This collection will bring those fans who came to T'Challa from movies and television a chance to learn why Wakanda has been such a source of fascination for us in the comic book world for so long. They'll get to meet the T'Challa we know, love and admire, and be able to finally absorb the true history of Wakanda as we were meant to experience it. They will marvel at the evolution of the character and his surroundings, and gasp in wonderment when they realize how much has changed, and how much more hasn't between the Panther of then and the Panther of today.

For those of us who have followed his adventures for decades, this will take us back to the tales we first encountered years ago and return once again to the Wakanda we knew and grew up with and the T'Challa on whom all others have been based.

For those who are coming to this with fresh eyes from the television series or the movies, they will finally get to know the T'Challa that we've loved for so long and understand why we were so desperate for him to be done *right* in those other mediums.

Because in the end, we're all fans of T'Challa, Shuri, Ramonda, the Dora Milaje, Killmonger and the world of Wakanda. We're all Wakandan at heart, no matter when we were born, where we live or when we discovered the Hidden Kingdom.

That's the only flaw in this collection. We comic book fans won't have anything to hold over the movie and television fans anymore. We'll have to retire our smug superiority. We'll have to let them into the club. We won't be special anymore.

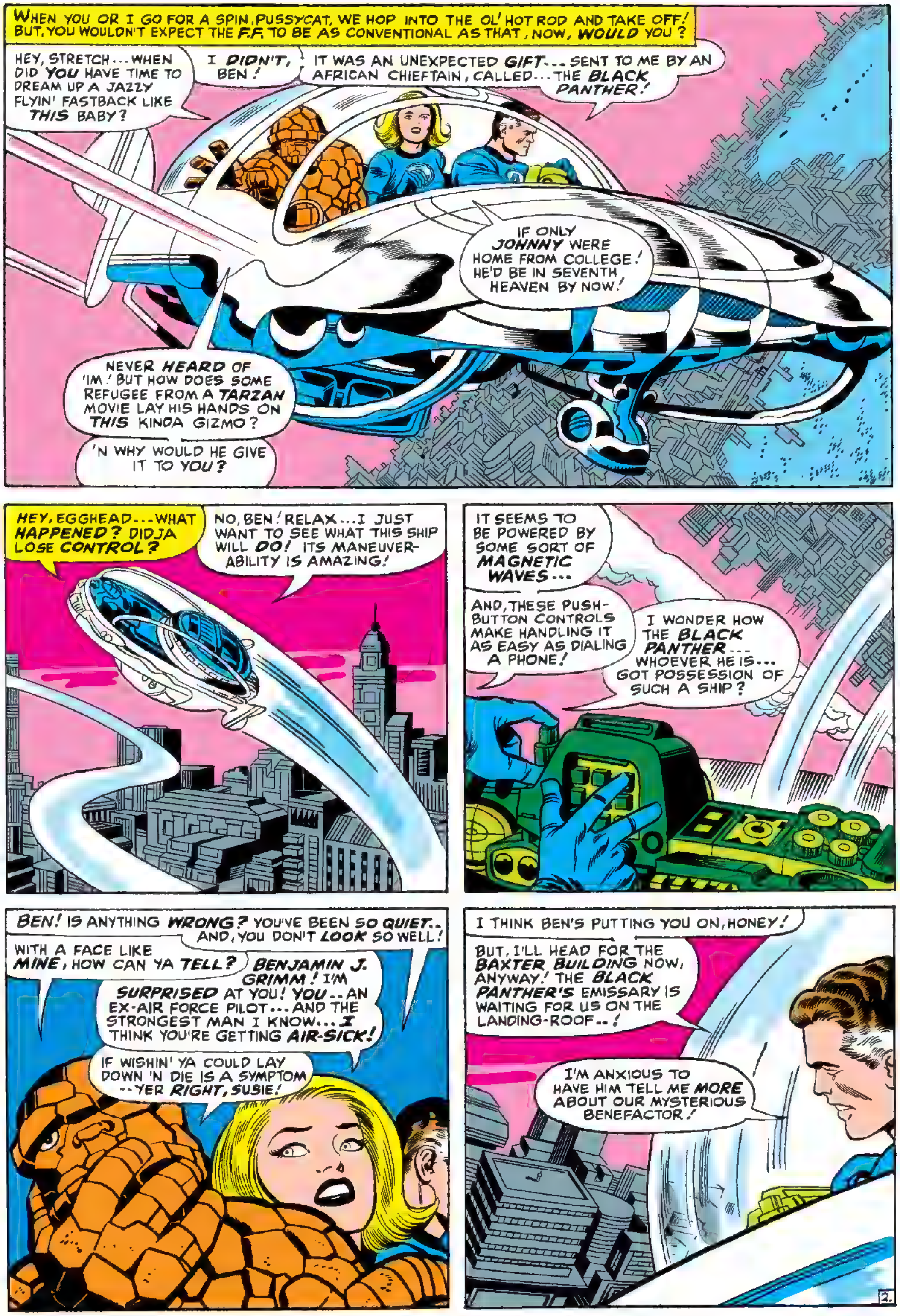
We'll all just be Wakandan. And you know what? That'll be more than enough.

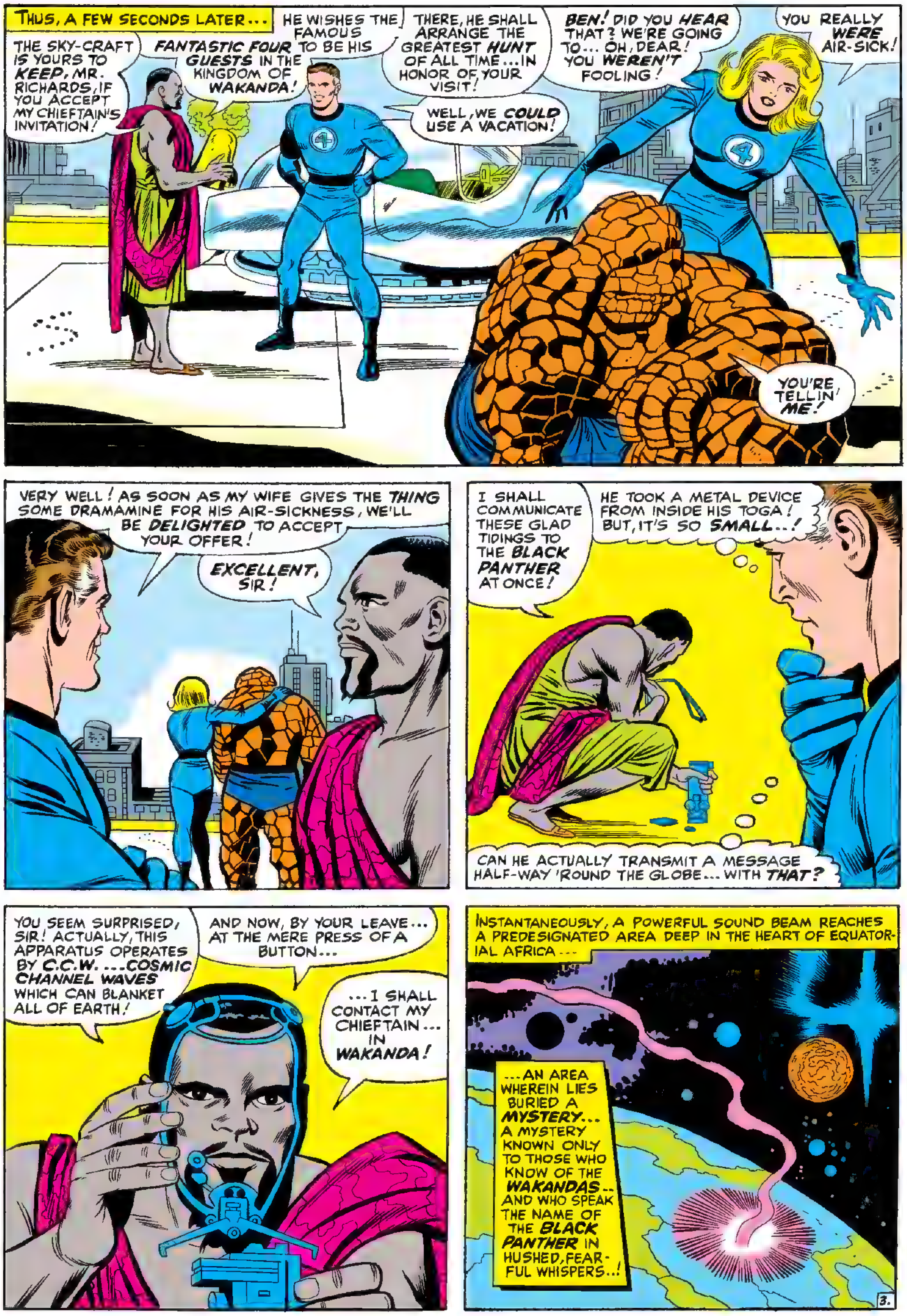
– Jesse J. Holland
2021

Jesse J. Holland is the author of the award-winning Black Panther: Tales of Wakanda *prose anthology and* Black Panther: Who is the Black Panther? *prose novel. He also wrote the* Superman: Red and Blue *comic book story "Deadline" and the* Represent! *issue "Heritage" for DC Comics. Holland is the noted nonfiction author of* The Invisibles: The Untold Story of African American Slaves in the White House *and* Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African American History in and Around Washington, D.C. *He hosts the Saturday edition of* Washington Journal *on C-SPAN and teaches journalism at George Washington University.*

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
52 JULY
12¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
Introducing: THE SENSATIONAL BLACK PANTHER!

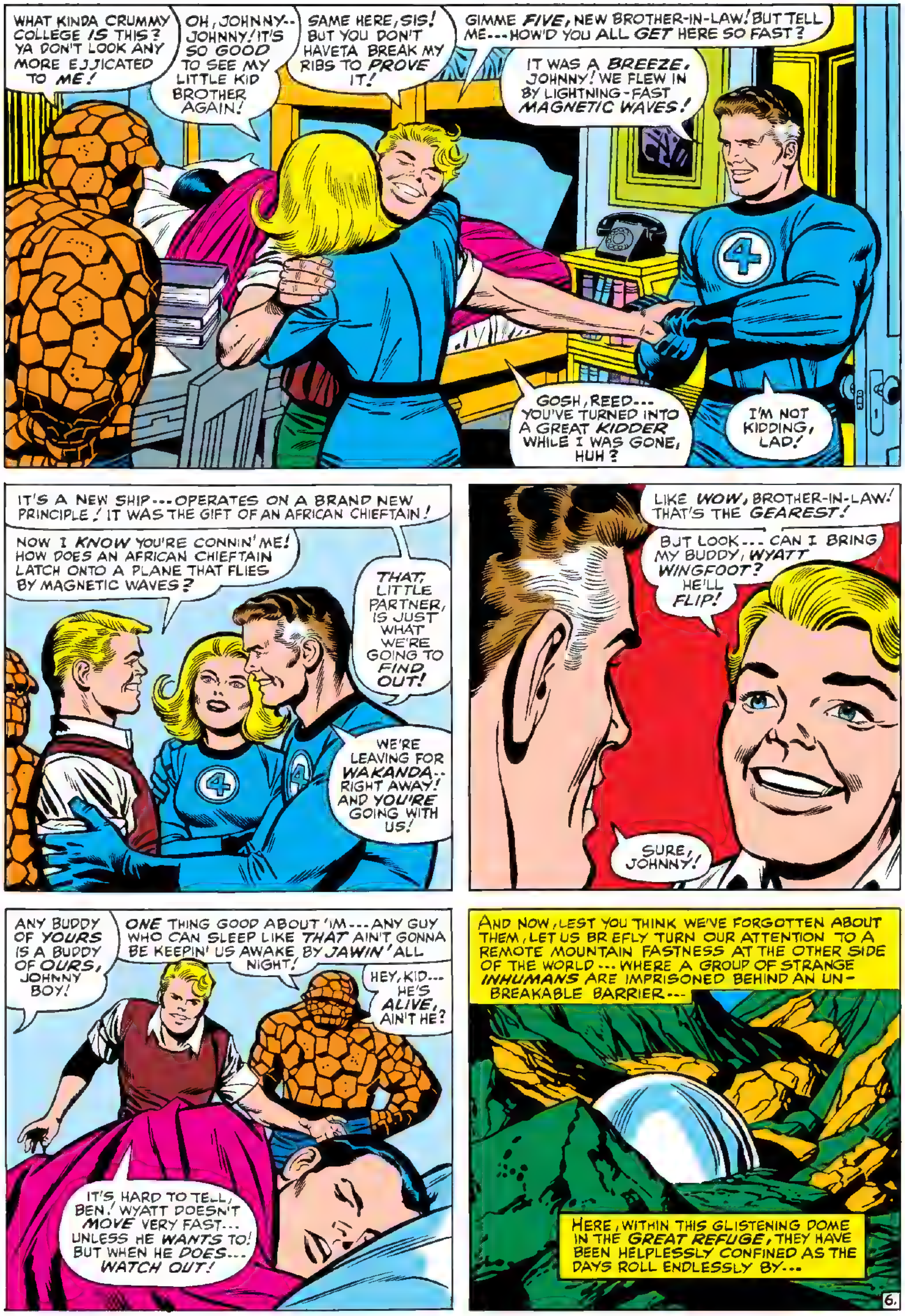
THE FABULOUS F.F. ARE TRAPPED IN THE INCREDIBLE REALM OF..
"THE BLACK PANTHER!"
ALSO FEATURING: The WAY-OUT and WONDERFUL WYATT WINGFOOT!
IT HAD TO BE TOLD... AS ONLY MIGHTY MARVEL COULD TELL IT!
SCRIPT BY: SMILIN' STAN LEE
ART BY: JOLLY JACKIE KIRBY
INKING BY: GENTLEMAN JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING BY: HAMMY SAMMY ROSEN
VOTED THE GREATEST TALE OF THE MONTH! (BY STAN AND JACK!)


WHEN YOU OR I GO FOR A SPIN, PUSSYCAT, WE HOP INTO THE OL' HOT ROD AND TAKE OFF! BUT, YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT THE F.F. TO BE AS CONVENTIONAL AS THAT, NOW, WOULD YOU?
HEY, STRETCH... WHEN DID YOU HAVE TIME TO DREAM UP A JAZZY FLYIN' FASTBACK LIKE THIS BABY?
I DIDN'T, BEN!
IT WAS AN UNEXPECTED GIFT... SENT TO ME BY AN AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN, CALLED... THE BLACK PANTHER!
IF ONLY JOHNNY WERE HOME FROM COLLEGE! HE'D BE IN SEVENTH HEAVEN BY NOW!
NEVER HEARD OF 'IM! BUT HOW DOES SOME REFUGEE FROM A TARZAN MOVIE LAY HIS HANDS ON THIS KINDA GIZMO?
'N WHY WOULD HE GIVE IT TO YOU?
HEY, EGGHEAD... WHAT HAPPENED? DIDJA LOSE CONTROL?
NO, BEN! RELAX... I JUST WANT TO SEE WHAT THIS SHIP WILL DO! ITS MANEUVER-ABILITY IS AMAZING!
IT SEEMS TO BE POWERED BY SOME SORT OF MAGNETIC WAVES...
AND, THESE PUSH-BUTTON CONTROLS MAKE HANDLING IT AS EASY AS DIALING A PHONE!
I WONDER HOW THE BLACK PANTHER... WHOEVER HE IS... GOT POSSESSION OF SUCH A SHIP?
BEN! IS ANYTHING WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN SO QUIET.. AND, YOU DON'T LOOK SO WELL!
WITH A FACE LIKE MINE, HOW CAN YA TELL?
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM! I'M SURPRISED AT YOU! YOU.. AN EX-AIR FORCE PILOT... AND THE STRONGEST MAN I KNOW... I THINK YOU'RE GETTING AIR-SICK!
IF WISHIN' YA COULD LAY DOWN 'N DIE IS A SYMPTOM --YER RIGHT, SUSIE!
I THINK BEN'S PUTTING YOU ON, HONEY!
BUT, I'LL HEAD FOR THE BAXTER BUILDING NOW, ANYWAY! THE BLACK PANTHER'S EMISSARY IS WAITING FOR US ON THE LANDING-ROOF..!
I'M ANXIOUS TO HAVE HIM TELL ME MORE ABOUT OUR MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR!
2.


THUS, A FEW SECONDS LATER...
THE SKY-CRAFT IS YOURS TO KEEP, MR. RICHARDS, IF YOU ACCEPT MY CHIEFTAIN'S INVITATION!
HE WISHES THE FAMOUS FANTASTIC FOUR TO BE HIS GUESTS IN THE KINGDOM OF WAKANDA!
THERE, HE SHALL ARRANGE THE GREATEST HUNT OF ALL TIME... IN HONOR OF YOUR VISIT!
WELL, WE COULD USE A VACATION!
BEN! DID YOU HEAR THAT? WE'RE GOING TO... OH, DEAR! YOU WEREN'T FOOLING!
YOU REALLY WERE AIR-SICK!
YOU'RE TELLIN' ME!
VERY WELL! AS SOON AS MY WIFE GIVES THE THING SOME DRAMAMINE FOR HIS AIR-SICKNESS, WE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO ACCEPT YOUR OFFER!
EXCELLENT, SIR!
I SHALL COMMUNICATE THESE GLAD TIDINGS TO THE BLACK PANTHER AT ONCE!
HE TOOK A METAL DEVICE FROM INSIDE HIS TOGA! BUT, IT'S SO SMALL...!
CAN HE ACTUALLY TRANSMIT A MESSAGE HALF-WAY 'ROUND THE GLOBE... WITH THAT?
YOU SEEM SURPRISED, SIR! ACTUALLY, THIS APPARATUS OPERATES BY C.C.W. ...COSMIC CHANNEL WAVES WHICH CAN BLANKET ALL OF EARTH!
AND NOW, BY YOUR LEAVE... AT THE MERE PRESS OF A BUTTON...
...I SHALL CONTACT MY CHIEFTAIN... IN WAKANDA!
INSTANTANEOUSLY, A POWERFUL SOUND BEAM REACHES A PREDESIGNATED AREA DEEP IN THE HEART OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA---
...AN AREA WHEREIN LIES BURIED A MYSTERY... A MYSTERY KNOWN ONLY TO THOSE WHO KNOW OF THE WAKANDAS... AND WHO SPEAK THE NAME OF THE BLACK PANTHER IN HUSHED, FEARFUL WHISPERS..!
3.

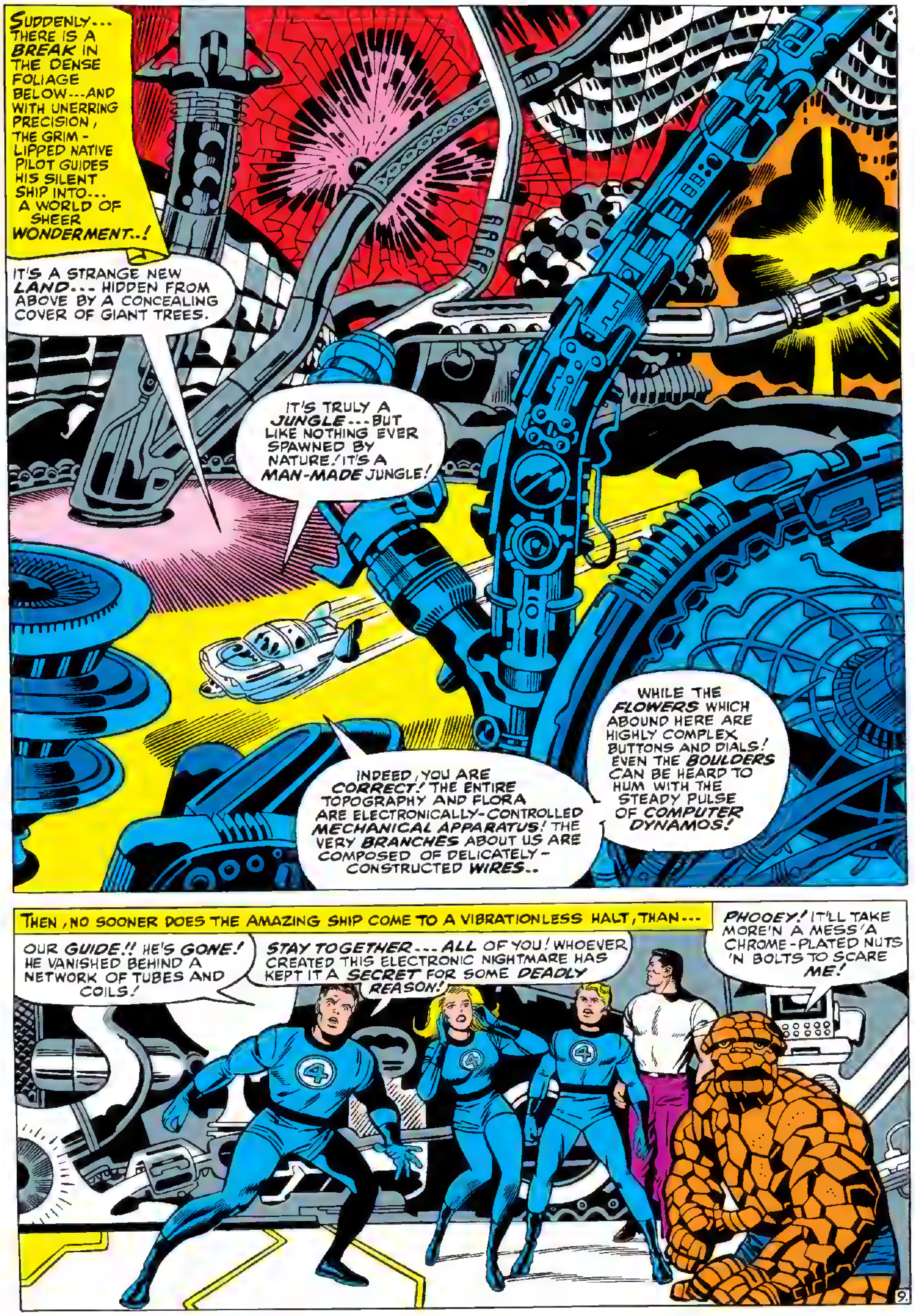
BUT NOW, AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR PREPARE FOR THEIR MOMENTOUS JOURNEY, LET US DO WHAT FEW WESTERN MEN HAVE EVER DONE--- LET US GAZE UPON THE ENTHRONED FIGURE OF HIM WHO RULES THE WAKANDAS ---
MIGHTY CHIEFTAIN! THE SIGNAL HAS BEEN RECEIVED! YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED! THE FANTASTIC FOUR WILL COME TO WAKANDA!
AS I KNEW THEY WOULD! IT IS GOOD!
NOW, LET THE PREPARATIONS BEGIN! THIS SHALL BE THE GREATEST HUNT OF ALL!
RAISE THE TOTEM! LET THE RITUAL BEGIN!
THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE BLACK PANTHER TO STALK ONCE MORE!
THEN, AT A SINGLE GESTURE FROM THE PROUD CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS, A STRANGE, CARVED FIGURE SWIFTLY RISES FROM ITS RESTING PLACE WITHIN A HIDDEN UNDERGROUND SILO ---
HO! YOUR BROTHER GREETS YOU THIS DAY! THE HUNT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!
4.

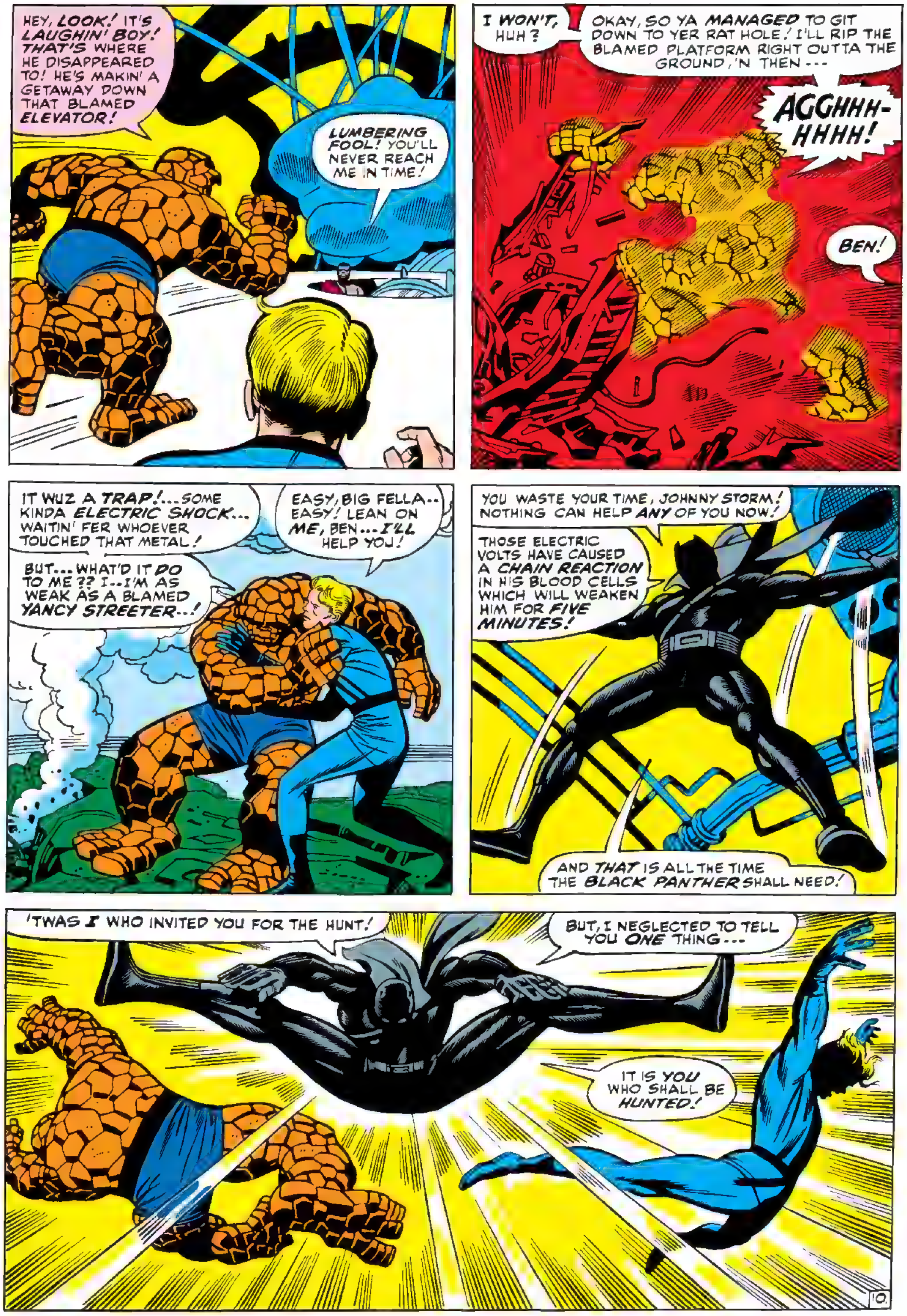
DEFTLY PUSHING A SERIES OF DELICATE CONTROL BUTTONS AT THE BASE OF THE GIGANTIC, FELINE FIGURE, THE POWERFULLY-BUILT MONARCH EXPOSES A BANK OF ELECTRONIC COMPUTERS, WITH WHICH HE CONTROLS THE MYRIAD WONDERS OF HIS MYSTERIOUS JUNGLE EMPIRE--!
ALL DEVICES ARE FULLY OPERATIONAL!
AND SO I REMOVE MY STALKING COSTUME FROM ITS CAREFULLY CONCEALED COMPARTMENT!
NOW, LET THE FANTASTIC FOUR COME!
THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL GREET THEM... AS THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN GREETED BEFORE!
WHILE, IN A QUIET ROOM IN NORTHFIELD DORMITORY, ON THE CAMPUS OF METRO COLLEGE, WE FIND...
I WONDER IF I PASSED TODAY'S EXAM?
I SURE DON'T WANT REED, SUE AND BEN TO BE ASHAMED OF ME!
NOTHING BOTHERS OL' WYATT! I'M SURPRISED HE EVEN MANAGED TO STAY AWAKE DURING THE TEST!
I CAN'T WAIT TILL MORNING... TO HEAD BACK HOME FOR VACATION!
IT'S HARD... HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE... TO CONCENTRATE ON MY COURSES... WHEN I CAN'T GET CRYSTAL OUT OF MY MIND!
BUT, I'VE GOT TO KEEP TRYING! UNTIL REED CAN FIND SOME WAY TO BREAK THE BARRIER THAT HOLDS HER PRISONER,* THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO!
NOTHING BUT HOPE... AND DREAM... AND PRAY!
I'VE GOT TO SNAP OUT OF IT... AND I WILL! IF ONLY THE EVENINGS WEREN'T SO LONG..!
* IF YOU MISSED F.F. #48, DON'T TELL US! YOU KNOW HOW UPSET WE GET! --- SHAKY STAN.
HEY!! HOLY HANNAH!! WHAT THE...?!!
SURPRISE!
HIYA, JOE COLLEGE! WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD, LITTLE ITTY BITTY BUDDY?
I'LL ITTY BITTY BUDDY YOU, YOU BLUE-EYED BIRDBRAIN!!
I KNOWED YA'D BE AS GOOD-NATURED AS EVER, JUNIOR!
LEGGO, BEFORE I GIVE YOU A HOT-FOOT BETWEEN WHERE YOUR EARS OUGHTTA BE!
5.

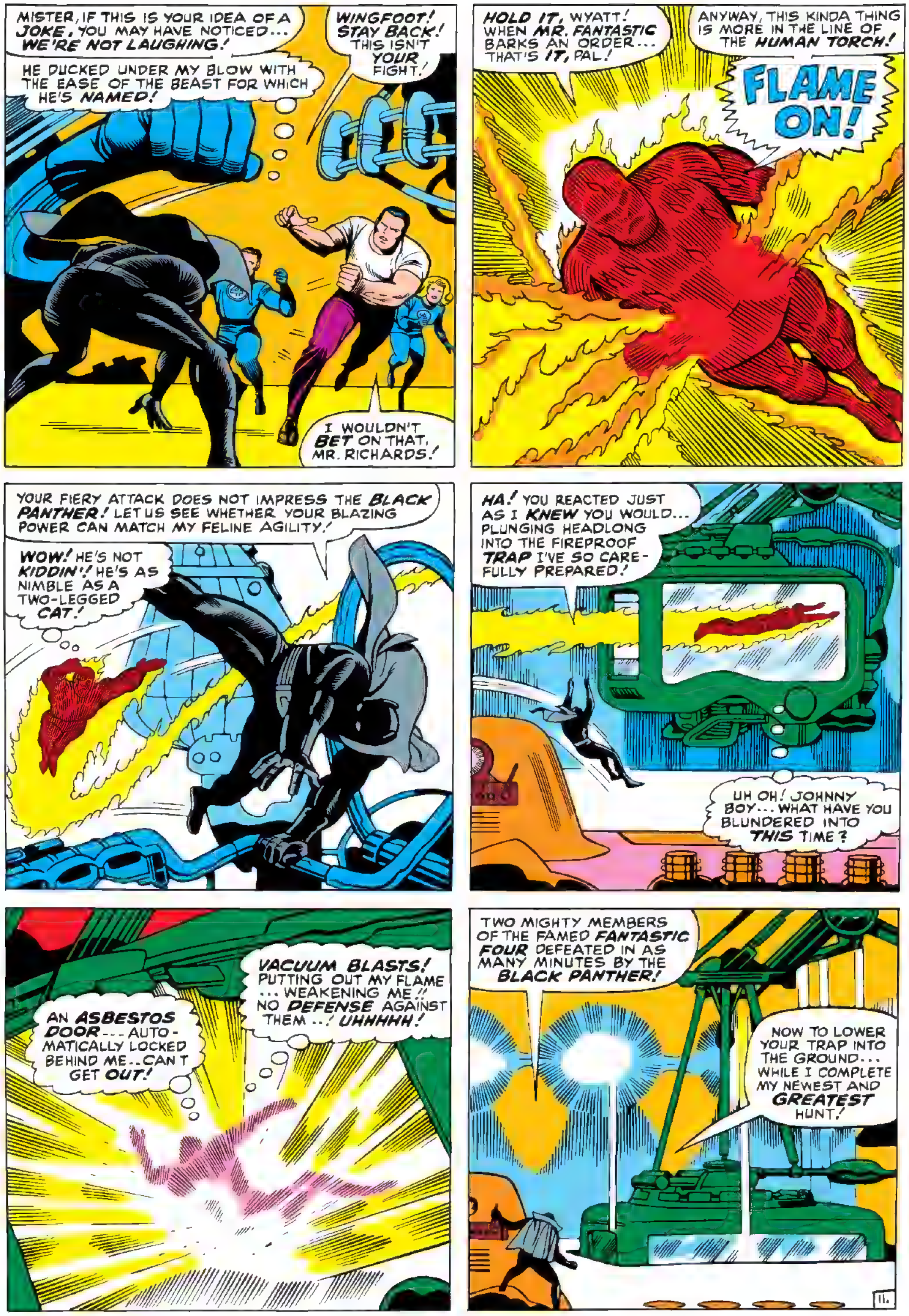

WHAT KINDA CRUMMY COLLEGE IS THIS? YA DON'T LOOK ANY MORE EJJICATED TO ME!
OH, JOHNNY-- JOHNNY! IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE MY LITTLE KID BROTHER AGAIN!
SAME HERE, SIS! BUT YOU DON'T HAVETA BREAK MY RIBS TO PROVE IT!
GIMME FIVE, NEW BROTHER-IN-LAW! BUT TELL ME--- HOW'D YOU ALL GET HERE SO FAST?
IT WAS A BREEZE, JOHNNY! WE FLEW IN BY LIGHTNING-FAST MAGNETIC WAVES!
GOSH, REED--- YOU'VE TURNED INTO A GREAT KIDDER WHILE I WAS GONE, HUH?
I'M NOT KIDDING, LAD!
IT'S A NEW SHIP--- OPERATES ON A BRAND NEW PRINCIPLE! IT WAS THE GIFT OF AN AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN!
NOW I KNOW YOU'RE CONNIN' ME! HOW DOES AN AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN LATCH ONTO A PLANE THAT FLIES BY MAGNETIC WAVES?
THAT, LITTLE PARTNER, IS JUST WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT!
WE'RE LEAVING FOR WAKANDA-- RIGHT AWAY! AND YOU'RE GOING WITH US!
LIKE WOW, BROTHER-IN-LAW! THAT'S THE GEAREST!
BUT LOOK--- CAN I BRING MY BUDDY, WYATT WINGFOOT? HE'LL FLIP!
SURE, JOHNNY!
ANY BUDDY OF YOURS IS A BUDDY OF OURS, JOHNNY BOY!
ONE THING GOOD ABOUT 'IM--- ANY GUY WHO CAN SLEEP LIKE THAT AIN'T GONNA BE KEEPIN' US AWAKE BY JAWIN' ALL NIGHT!
HEY, KID--- HE'S ALIVE, AIN'T HE?
IT'S HARD TO TELL, BEN! WYATT DOESN'T MOVE VERY FAST--- UNLESS HE WANTS TO! BUT WHEN HE DOES--- WATCH OUT!
AND NOW, LEST YOU THINK WE'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THEM, LET US BRIEFLY TURN OUR ATTENTION TO A REMOTE MOUNTAIN FASTNESS AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD --- WHERE A GROUP OF STRANGE INHUMANS ARE IMPRISONED BEHIND AN UN-BREAKABLE BARRIER---
HERE, WITHIN THIS GLISTENING DOME IN THE GREAT REFUGE, THEY HAVE BEEN HELPLESSLY CONFINED AS THE DAYS ROLL ENDLESSLY BY---
6.

BUT, THOUGH THEIR PLIGHT SEEMS TRULY HOPELESS, THEY REFUSE TO DESPAIR...
YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, KARNAK! EVEN YOUR POWER CANNOT SHATTER A NEGATIVE ZONE!
IT COULD, GORGON...IF I COULD FIND THE ONE WEAK SPOT! PERHAPS I NEED MORE PRACTICE!
BUT YOU'VE BEEN SHATTERING THOSE DIAMOND BLOCKS FOR MONTHS!
I MUST KEEP MY HAND IN! WE MUST NEVER STOP TRYING!
EVERYTHING HAS ONE WEAK SPOT!! EVERYTHING!! EVEN THIS SEEMINGLY INDESTRUCTIBLE DIAMOND BLOCK!
BUT, A NEGATIVE ZONE IS DIFFERENT! IT CAN REPEL ANY POSITIVE MATTER!
NO! I'LL FIND A WAY! NOTHING CAN RESIST THE POWER OF KARNAK!
NOTHING!!
CLAKK!
IF I CAN SHATTER THE HARDEST SUBSTANCE KNOWN ON EARTH...WHY CAN'T I FREE US FROM THE PRISON OF THIS ACCURSED NEGATIVE ZONE??! WHY? WHY? WHY?
OH, KARNAK...IF ONLY YOU COULD! IF ONLY WE COULD ONE DAY REJOIN THE HUMAN RACE..!
STAND BACK! I'LL TRY AGAIN..!
IF I COULD SEE JOHNNY STORM ONCE MORE...FEEL HIS ARMS AROUND ME AGAIN...JUST ONCE MORE..
I'VE TOLD YOU, CRYSTAL.. YOU MUST FORGET HIM! YOU MUSTN'T TORTURE YOURSELF SO!
ARRRHHHH!
NO MORE, KARNAK...NO MORE! YOU'LL BREAK YOUR HAND! THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY!!
THEN, FROM A SECURELY-LOCKED CELL, HIGH ABOVE, THE MAD, CACKLING LAUGHTER OF MAXIMUS...THE POWER-CRAZED BROTHER OF BLACK BOLT..TAUNTS THE DESPERATE LITTLE BAND WHOM WE KNOW AS... THE INHUMANS!
I AM THE RIGHTFUL KING... NOT BLACK BOLT!!
YOU'LL NEVER BE FREE! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER!
AND MY SUBJECTS MUST REMAIN WITH ME... FOREVER!!
7.

WHAT MONUMENTAL IRONY! ONLY MAXIMUS KNOWS THE SECRET OF ESCAPING FROM THE NEGATIVE ZONE!! THUS, THE KEY WILL BE ETERNALLY LOCKED IN A MADMAN'S BRAIN!
AHH, BLACK BOLT.. IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE MIGHTIEST AMONG US... AND EVEN YOU STAND HELPLESS!
WE MUST NEVER ABANDON HOPE! I KNOW THE MAN I LOVE WILL NOT FAIL US! SOME DAY... SOMEHOW..BLACK BOLT WILL FIND THE WAY TO FREE US ALL!
BUT, FOR ME, IT MAY BE... TOO LATE! WHAT IF JOHNNY STORM HAS FOUND ANOTHER?
I'LL NEVER STOP TRYING! NEVER! NEVER..!
'TIS ALMOST GOOD THAT YOU HAVE LOST THE POWER OF SPEECH... FOR, OF WHAT USE ARE WORDS TO US..NOW?
AND THAT, FRANTIC ONE, IS ALL WE'LL SEE OF THE INHUMANS THIS ISH! WE JUST WANTED TO WHET YOUR APPETITE A BIT! BESIDES, IT'S TIME TO VISIT WAKANDA... SO C'MON..THE SAFARI'S JUST LEAVING...
SHIP APPROACHES! ALL GOES AS PLANNED!
AS THE CHIEFTAIN HAS PROMISED... THIS WILL BE HIS GREATEST HUNT!
THE JUNGLE LOOKS SO PRIMITIVE... SO UNDEVELOPED! ARE YOU SURE WE HAVE REACHED WAKANDA TERRITORY?
WE ARE VIRTUALLY AT OUR DESTINATION, MR. RICHARDS!
AND YOU WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER... IN THIS LAND, THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS... AS THEY SEEM!
IT'S SO HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A SHIP SUCH AS THIS ONE COULD HAVE COME FROM A LAND WITH NO SIGN OF TECHNOLOGY ...OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT..!
BEFORE YOUR VISIT IS ENDED, MRS. RICHARDS, YOU WILL FIND MANY MORE SURPRISING FACETS OF OUR LITTLE KINGDOM!
I DON'T LIKE IT! THERE'S SOMETHING OMINOUS IN THE AIR... AND YET, I DON'T WANT TO ALARM SUE!
IT'S TOO LATE TO TURN BACK NOW! I'LL JUST HAVE TO REMAIN ON GUARD!
GOOD OL' WYATT! I GUESS HE'S JUST NOT MUCH FOR SIGHT-SEEING!
IF THEY HAD A KENTUCKY DERBY FOR SLEEPERS... I'D PUT MY WHOLE WAD ON HIM!
I'LL BET HE COULDA SNORED HIS WAY THROUGH THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE!
8.

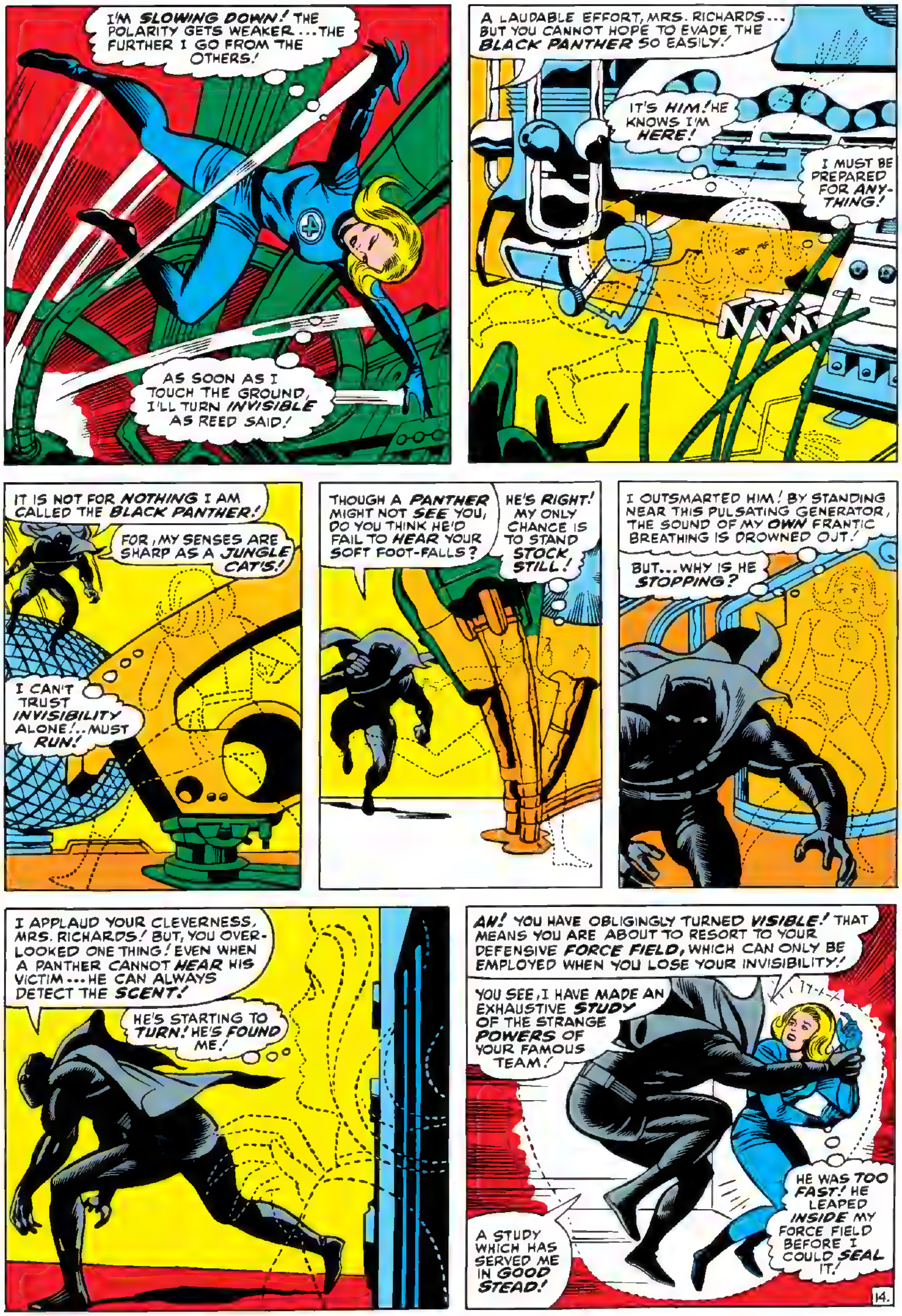

SUDDENLY... THERE IS A BREAK IN THE DENSE FOLIAGE BELOW...AND WITH UNERRING PRECISION, THE GRIM-LIPPED NATIVE PILOT GUIDES HIS SILENT SHIP INTO... A WORLD OF SHEER WONDERMENT..!
IT'S A STRANGE NEW LAND... HIDDEN FROM ABOVE BY A CONCEALING COVER OF GIANT TREES.
IT'S TRULY A JUNGLE... BUT LIKE NOTHING EVER SPAWNED BY NATURE! IT'S A MAN-MADE JUNGLE!
INDEED, YOU ARE CORRECT! THE ENTIRE TOPOGRAPHY AND FLORA ARE ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED MECHANICAL APPARATUS! THE VERY BRANCHES ABOUT US ARE COMPOSED OF DELICATELY-CONSTRUCTED WIRES..
WHILE THE FLOWERS WHICH ABOUND HERE ARE HIGHLY COMPLEX BUTTONS AND DIALS! EVEN THE BOULDERS CAN BE HEARD TO HUM WITH THE STEADY PULSE OF COMPUTER DYNAMOS!
THEN, NO SOONER DOES THE AMAZING SHIP COME TO A VIBRATIONLESS HALT, THAN...
OUR GUIDE!! HE'S GONE! HE VANISHED BEHIND A NETWORK OF TUBES AND COILS!
STAY TOGETHER... ALL OF YOU! WHOEVER CREATED THIS ELECTRONIC NIGHTMARE HAS KEPT IT A SECRET FOR SOME DEADLY REASON!
PHOOEY! IT'LL TAKE MORE'N A MESS 'A CHROME-PLATED NUTS 'N BOLTS TO SCARE ME!
9.


HEY, LOOK! IT'S LAUGHIN' BOY! THAT'S WHERE HE DISAPPEARED TO! HE'S MAKIN' A GETAWAY DOWN THAT BLAMED ELEVATOR!
LUMBERING FOOL! YOU'LL NEVER REACH ME IN TIME!
I WON'T, HUH?
OKAY, SO YA MANAGED TO GIT DOWN TO YER RAT HOLE! I'LL RIP THE BLAMED PLATFORM RIGHT OUTTA THE GROUND, 'N THEN ---
AGGHHH-HHHH!
BEN!
IT WUZ A TRAP!...SOME KINDA ELECTRIC SHOCK... WAITIN' FER WHOEVER TOUCHED THAT METAL!
EASY, BIG FELLA.. EASY! LEAN ON ME, BEN... I'LL HELP YOU!
BUT... WHAT'D IT DO TO ME?? I--I'M AS WEAK AS A BLAMED YANCY STREETER..!
YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, JOHNNY STORM! NOTHING CAN HELP ANY OF YOU NOW!
THOSE ELECTRIC VOLTS HAVE CAUSED A CHAIN REACTION IN HIS BLOOD CELLS WHICH WILL WEAKEN HIM FOR FIVE MINUTES!
AND THAT IS ALL THE TIME THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL NEED!
'TWAS I WHO INVITED YOU FOR THE HUNT!
BUT, I NEGLECTED TO TELL YOU ONE THING---
IT IS YOU WHO SHALL BE HUNTED!
10

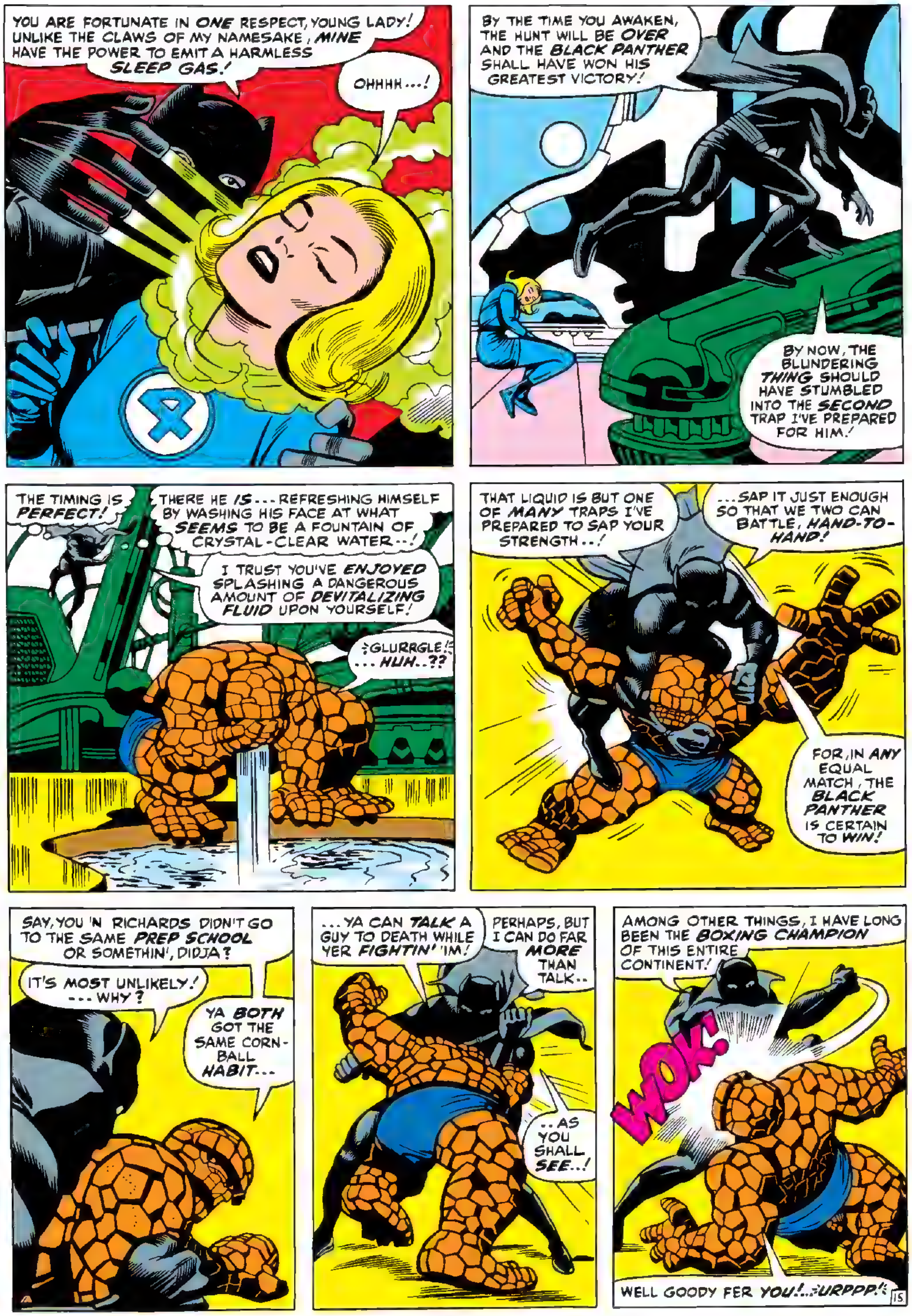

MISTER, IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A JOKE, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED... WE'RE NOT LAUGHING!
HE DUCKED UNDER MY BLOW WITH THE EASE OF THE BEAST FOR WHICH HE'S NAMED!
WINGFOOT! STAY BACK! THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT!
I WOULDN'T BET ON THAT, MR. RICHARDS!
HOLD IT, WYATT! WHEN MR. FANTASTIC BARKS AN ORDER... THAT'S IT, PAL!
ANYWAY, THIS KINDA THING IS MORE IN THE LINE OF THE HUMAN TORCH!
FLAME ON!
YOUR FIERY ATTACK DOES NOT IMPRESS THE BLACK PANTHER! LET US SEE WHETHER YOUR BLAZING POWER CAN MATCH MY FELINE AGILITY!
WOW! HE'S NOT KIDDIN'! HE'S AS NIMBLE AS A TWO-LEGGED CAT!
HA! YOU REACTED JUST AS I KNEW YOU WOULD... PLUNGING HEADLONG INTO THE FIREPROOF TRAP I'VE SO CAREFULLY PREPARED!
UH OH! JOHNNY BOY... WHAT HAVE YOU BLUNDERED INTO THIS TIME?
AN ASBESTOS DOOR... AUTOMATICALLY LOCKED BEHIND ME.. CAN'T GET OUT!
VACUUM BLASTS! PUTTING OUT MY FLAME ... WEAKENING ME!! NO DEFENSE AGAINST THEM ..! UHHHHH!
TWO MIGHTY MEMBERS OF THE FAMED FANTASTIC FOUR DEFEATED IN AS MANY MINUTES BY THE BLACK PANTHER!
NOW TO LOWER YOUR TRAP INTO THE GROUND... WHILE I COMPLETE MY NEWEST AND GREATEST HUNT!
11

AHH... MY PREY LEARNS QUICKLY! THEY HAVE ELECTED TO STOP AND PLAN BEFORE PLUNGING WITLESSLY INTO ANOTHER FOOLHARDY ATTACK!
THAT IS GOOD! A VICTORY TOO EASILY WON IS TOO SOON FORGOTTEN!
AND, SEPARATED FROM THEIR ASTOUNDING ANTAGONIST BY A VAST, MIND-STAGGERING COMPLEX OF UNFATHOMABLE ELECTRONIC MARVELS, WE FIND...
HE SAID I'D BE WEAK FOR FIVE MINUTES, BUT IT'S ONLY BEEN A COUPLE'A MINUTES AND I FEEL LIKE MY OL' BEAUTIFUL SELF AGAIN!
EVEN THE BLACK PANTHER DIDN'T REALIZE HOW TRULY STRONG YOU ARE, BEN!
WHAT ABOUT JOHNNY? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
BUT, DON'T LAUNCH ANY NEW ATTACKS, OLD FRIEND, UNTIL I GIVE THE WORD!
BENEATH OUR FEET.. THE HUM OF POWERFUL GENERATORS... GIVING OFF LIMITLESS ENERGY!
BEN.. WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!!
DON'T DO IT, MR. GRIMM! PUT THAT IRON DEVICE DOWN! PUT IT DOWN!
RELAX, STRETCHO! I'M JUST TESTIN' MY EVER-LOVIN' STRENGTH!
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'!!
THE ONLY GUY-WHO GIVES ME ORDERS IS A GUY WHO CAN LICK ME!
AND THERE AIN'T NO SUCH ANIMAL!
LOOK, SIR... I'M NOT PRESUMING TO GIVE ORDERS TO ANYONE!
BUT, IT'S PATENTLY OBVIOUS THAT A SUPERIOR INTELLECT BUILT THIS ELECTRONIC JUNGLE... AND EVERYTHING YOU TOUCH MIGHT BE A FATAL BOOBY TRAP!
USE YOUR HEAD, BEN! WINGFOOT IS DEAD RIGHT!
OUR FIRST JOB IS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST!
AND I'M THE ONE TO DO THAT FOR YOU, SIR!
NO WONDER JOHNNY TOOK A SHINE TO THAT JOE! THE KID'S GOT WHAT IT TAKES!
THE BLOOD OF MY ANCESTORS -- THE GREATEST SCOUTS OF ALL TIME... FLOWS STRONG IN MY VEINS!
WE'LL STAY TOGETHER HERE TILL YOU RETURN, SON!
12.

SUE, DARLING... DON'T WORRY ABOUT JOHNNY.. YET! THE PANTHER IS JUST TOYING WITH US NOW... TAUNTING US!
IF ONLY WE COULD LEARN HIS MOTIVE!
THE ODDS SEEM SO HOPELESS! WE'RE ON HIS HOME GROUND.. IN A FIGHT WHERE HE MAKES THE RULES... WHERE HE HAS PLANNED EVERYTHING BEFOREHAND!
SHEESH! YA WANNA BORROW MY CRYIN' TOWEL ?!!
HEY.. LISTEN! WHAT'SAT?
DRUMS!! LOUD 'N CLEAR! IT MUST BE MOOD MUSIC TO BE CLOBBERED BY!
LOOK SHARP!! IT'S AN ATTACK SIGNAL OF SOME SORT!
THANKS FER TELLIN' US! WE MIGHTA THOUGHT IT WAS LAWRENCE WELK!
TAKE YOUR POSITIONS!! READY YOUR POLARITY GUNS! RELEASE SAFETY! AIM!
CLICK!
CLICK!
CLICK!
FIRE!
WHAT'SIS... A GAG? DO THEY EXPECT TO POLISH US OFF BY SHOOTIN' FLASHLIGHT BEAMS AT US?
THEY'RE NOT LIGHT BEAMS, BEN! FEEL THAT VIBRATION? WE'VE BEEN HIT BY MAGNETIC ANTI-POLARITY BEAMS!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT ARE THEY..?
THEY MAKE OBJECTS REPEL EACH OTHER! WE CAN'T STAY TO-GETHER... TILL THEY WEAR OFF!
THE PANTHER WANTS TO SEPARATE US... TO ATTACK US INDIVIDUALLY! TURN INVISIBLE WHEN YOU LAND, SUE!
IT'S GETTIN' SO THAT YA CAN'T POKE YER SNOOT OUTTA THE HOUSE WITHOUT RUNNIN' INTA SOME NEW REJECT FROM MAD SCIENTISTS, INCORPORATED!
THWUP!
13.

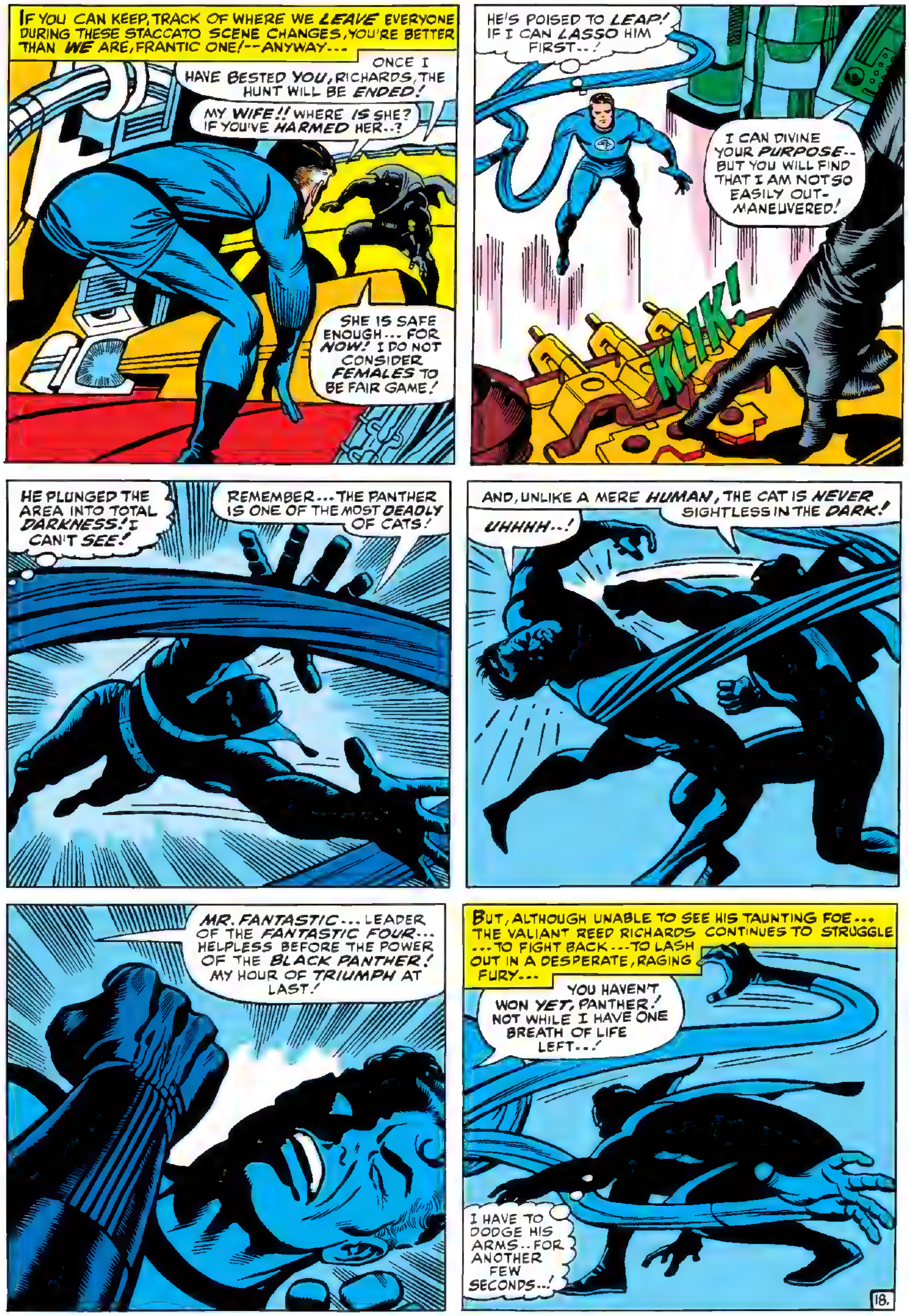


I'M SLOWING DOWN! THE POLARITY GETS WEAKER... THE FURTHER I GO FROM THE OTHERS!
AS SOON AS I TOUCH THE GROUND, I'LL TURN INVISIBLE AS REED SAID!
A LAUDABLE EFFORT, MRS. RICHARDS... BUT YOU CANNOT HOPE TO EVADE THE BLACK PANTHER SO EASILY!
IT'S HIM! HE KNOWS I'M HERE!
I MUST BE PREPARED FOR ANY-THING!
IT IS NOT FOR NOTHING I AM CALLED THE BLACK PANTHER!
FOR, MY SENSES ARE SHARP AS A JUNGLE CAT'S!
I CAN'T TRUST INVISIBILITY ALONE!... MUST RUN!
THOUGH A PANTHER MIGHT NOT SEE YOU, DO YOU THINK HE'D FAIL TO HEAR YOUR SOFT FOOT-FALLS?
HE'S RIGHT! MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO STAND STOCK STILL!
I OUTSMARTED HIM! BY STANDING NEAR THIS PULSATING GENERATOR, THE SOUND OF MY OWN FRANTIC BREATHING IS DROWNED OUT!
BUT... WHY IS HE STOPPING?
I APPLAUD YOUR CLEVERNESS, MRS. RICHARDS! BUT, YOU OVER-LOOKED ONE THING! EVEN WHEN A PANTHER CANNOT HEAR HIS VICTIM... HE CAN ALWAYS DETECT THE SCENT!
HE'S STARTING TO TURN! HE'S FOUND ME!
AH! YOU HAVE OBLIGINGLY TURNED VISIBLE! THAT MEANS YOU ARE ABOUT TO RESORT TO YOUR DEFENSIVE FORCE FIELD, WHICH CAN ONLY BE EMPLOYED WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR INVISIBILITY!
YOU SEE, I HAVE MADE AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY OF THE STRANGE POWERS OF YOUR FAMOUS TEAM!
A STUDY WHICH HAS SERVED ME IN GOOD STEAD!
HE WAS TOO FAST! HE LEAPED INSIDE MY FORCE FIELD BEFORE I COULD SEAL IT!
14.

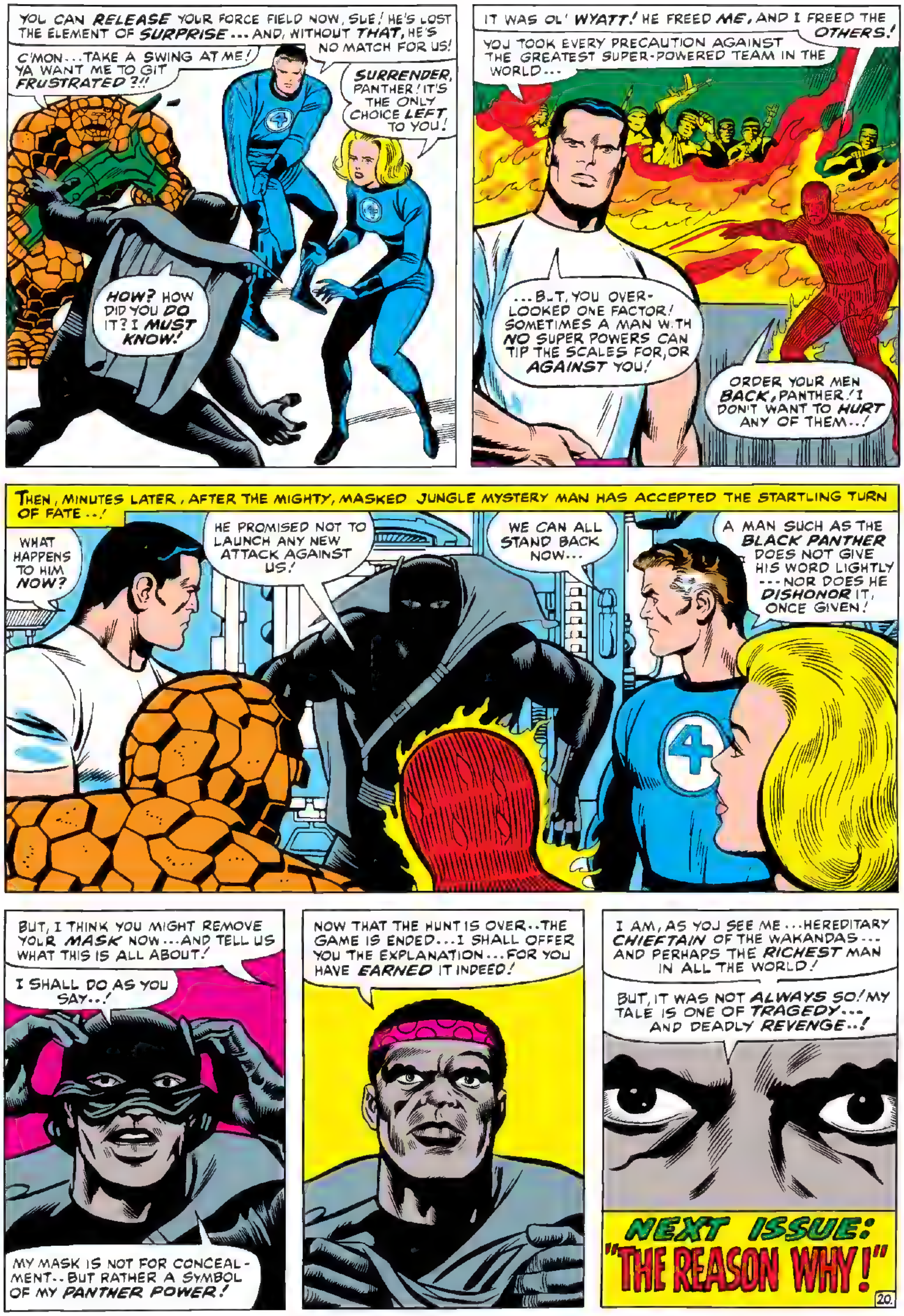

YOU ARE FORTUNATE IN ONE RESPECT, YOUNG LADY! UNLIKE THE CLAWS OF MY NAMESAKE, MINE HAVE THE POWER TO EMIT A HARMLESS SLEEP GAS!
OHHHH...!
BY THE TIME YOU AWAKEN, THE HUNT WILL BE OVER AND THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL HAVE WON HIS GREATEST VICTORY!
BY NOW, THE BLUNDERING THING SHOULD HAVE STUMBLED INTO THE SECOND TRAP I'VE PREPARED FOR HIM!
THE TIMING IS PERFECT!
THERE HE IS... REFRESHING HIMSELF BY WASHING HIS FACE AT WHAT SEEMS TO BE A FOUNTAIN OF CRYSTAL-CLEAR WATER...!
I TRUST YOU'VE ENJOYED SPLASHING A DANGEROUS AMOUNT OF DEVITALIZING FLUID UPON YOURSELF!
GLURRGLE! ...HUH..??
THAT LIQUID IS BUT ONE OF MANY TRAPS I'VE PREPARED TO SAP YOUR STRENGTH..!
...SAP IT JUST ENOUGH SO THAT WE TWO CAN BATTLE, HAND-TO-HAND!
FOR, IN ANY EQUAL MATCH, THE BLACK PANTHER IS CERTAIN TO WIN!
SAY, YOU 'N RICHARDS DIDN'T GO TO THE SAME PREP SCHOOL OR SOMETHIN', DIDJA?
IT'S MOST UNLIKELY! ...WHY?
YA BOTH GOT THE SAME CORN-BALL HABIT...
...YA CAN TALK A GUY TO DEATH WHILE YER FIGHTIN' 'IM!
PERHAPS, BUT I CAN DO FAR MORE THAN TALK..
..AS YOU SHALL SEE..!
AMONG OTHER THINGS, I HAVE LONG BEEN THE BOXING CHAMPION OF THIS ENTIRE CONTINENT!
WOK!
WELL GOODY FER YOU!..URPPP!
15

JUST STAY THERE, WISE GUY...TILL I GIT TO MY FEET! THAT'S ALL I ASK!
I SHALL BE HAPPY TO OBLIGE YOU!
FOR, AFTER ALL... UNTIL YOU STAND, I'LL BE DENIED THE EXQUISITE PLEASURE OF FLOORING YOU AGAIN!
GOTTA STEADY MYSELF! CAN'T FALL APART JUST 'CAUSE HE WEAKENED ME WITH THAT PHONY WATER!
THEN SUDDENLY... WITH FEROCIOUS SPEED TOTALLY BELYING HIS MAMMOTH BULK, THE THING STRIKES BACK...!
POW!
MEBBE THIS'LL SHUT YER YAP FER A WHILE!
NUTS! IF NOT FER DRINKIN' THAT BLASTED WATER, I'DA DEMOLISHED 'IM WITH THAT WHAP! BUT, I'LL BEAT 'IM ANYHOW!
YOUR COURAGE IS TRULY A MATCH FOR YOUR FAME!
BUT YOUR SKILL, ALAS, CANNOT NEARLY COMPARE WITH MINE!
YEAH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!
HE'S CHARGING INTO ME LIKE A MADDENED RHINO! I'VE GOT TO SIDESTEP, AND THEN...
LOOK OUT!! IF YOU UPSET THAT HIGH-VOLTAGE REFRIGERATION UNIT, IT'LL FREEZE YOU ALIVE WITHIN SECONDS!
BAM!
UNHHH! NOW YA TELL ME!!
TOO LATE!!
YOU ARE INDEED FORTUNATE, THING!
YOUR OWN MASSIVE STRENGTH WAS BEGINNING TO RETURN AGAIN AT THE EXACT MOMENT OF IMPACT!
THUS, YOU WILL SURVIVE THE DEEP FREEZE... THOUGH IT WILL TAKE YOU A WHILE TO THAW OUT!
AND NOW FOR YOUR LEADER... THE ONE WHOM I CONSIDER THE MOST DANGEROUS FOE OF ALL!
BUT, EVEN THE FABULOUS MR. FANTASTIC WILL BE NO MATCH FOR ME!
16.

MEANWHILE, WHAT OF WYATT WINGFOOT? (...WE THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK!)
SO! THE EDGE OF THE REAL JUNGLE, AT LAST! BUT, WHAT'S THIS?
A HIDDEN OBSERVATION POST... THE WAKANDAS HAVE BEEN SECRETLY MONITORING THE F.F.!
OUR CHIEFTAIN MUST DEFEAT ONLY ONE MORE TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL OF TOTAL VICTORY!
THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL NOT FAIL!
BUT THEN, WITH THE STEALTHY SILENCE OF HIS PROUD, RED-SKINNED FOREBEARS, THE INDIAN YOUTH STRIKES!
IF I CAN CRIPPLE THE BLACK PANTHER'S COMMUNICATIONS, IT MAY HELP THE F.F.!
BAM!
LUCKY FOR ME THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING AN ATTACK! NOW IF THEY'LL JUST STAY OUT LONG ENOUGH..!
THERE! THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO SPY ON ANYONE ELSE WITH THESE ELECTRONIC SCANNERS!
AND NOW, I'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE OTHERS... WHILE I STILL CAN!
KRAK!
I'VE GOT TO FIND THEM AGAIN, AND LEAD THEM OUT OF THIS ARTIFICIAL JUNGLE INTO THE REAL ONE!
SO LONG AS THEY'RE SURROUNDED BY ALL OF THE BLACK PANTHER'S ELABORATE TRAPS, THE ODDS MUST BE AGAINST THEM!
BUT, MINUTES LATER, AS THE COURAGEOUS YOUTH REACHES HIS DESTINATION...
I'M TOO LATE!! THEY'RE GONE!
WAIT... WHAT'S THIS? THE GROUND... IT FEELS WARM!
IS THERE SOME SORT OF DYNAMO BENEATH ME, OR.. CAN IT BE..?!!
THE INTENSITY OF THE HEAT KEEPS VARYING! THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE EXPLANATION...
IT'S THE TORCH! HE'S TRAPPED BENEATH ME... AND HE'S TRYING TO SIGNAL.. TO CATCH MY ATTENTION!
NO MATTER WHAT.. I MUSTN'T FAIL HIM!


IF YOU CAN KEEP TRACK OF WHERE WE LEAVE EVERYONE DURING THESE STACCATO SCENE CHANGES, YOU'RE BETTER THAN WE ARE, FRANTIC ONE!--ANYWAY...
ONCE I HAVE BESTED YOU, RICHARDS, THE HUNT WILL BE ENDED!
MY WIFE!! WHERE IS SHE? IF YOU'VE HARMED HER..?
SHE IS SAFE ENOUGH... FOR NOW! I DO NOT CONSIDER FEMALES TO BE FAIR GAME!
HE'S POISED TO LEAP! IF I CAN LASSO HIM FIRST..!
I CAN DIVINE YOUR PURPOSE.. BUT YOU WILL FIND THAT I AM NOT SO EASILY OUT-MANEUVERED!
KLIK!
HE PLUNGED THE AREA INTO TOTAL DARKNESS! I CAN'T SEE!
REMEMBER... THE PANTHER IS ONE OF THE MOST DEADLY OF CATS!
AND, UNLIKE A MERE HUMAN, THE CAT IS NEVER SIGHTLESS IN THE DARK!
UHHHH..!
MR. FANTASTIC... LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR... HELPLESS BEFORE THE POWER OF THE BLACK PANTHER! MY HOUR OF TRIUMPH AT LAST!
BUT, ALTHOUGH UNABLE TO SEE HIS TAUNTING FOE... THE VALIANT REED RICHARDS CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE ...TO FIGHT BACK...TO LASH OUT IN A DESPERATE, RAGING FURY...
YOU HAVEN'T WON YET, PANTHER! NOT WHILE I HAVE ONE BREATH OF LIFE LEFT..!
I HAVE TO DODGE HIS ARMS..FOR ANOTHER FEW SECONDS..!
18.

HERE I AM, RICHARDS! HERE I AM! IF YOU WANT ME, JUST REACH OUT.. I'M WAITING FOR YOU!
HE'S DELIBERATELY GOADING ME--TRYING TO TRICK ME IN SOME WAY! BUT I MUST KEEP GROPING FOR HIM---I MUST GET HIM---SOMEHOW--!
I DON'T KNOW YOUR MOTIVE FOR ANY OF THIS... BUT YOU'LL LEARN.. AS SO MANY HAVE LEARNED BEFORE YOU...THAT NOBODY ATTACKS THE FANTASTIC FOUR--
---NOT WITHOUT PAYING FOR THAT PRIVILEGE.. AND PAYING IN FULL!
CLICK!
HE SWITCHED THE LIGHTS BACK ON! I CAN SEE AGAIN!
I KNEW YOUR GROPING HANDS WOULD EVENTUALLY FIND THEIR WAY INTO MY SPECIALLY-PREPARED TITANIUM CUFFS!
TLAK!
TLAK!
AND SO, THE TABLEAU ENDS! THE HUNT IS OVER!
THE BLACK PANTHER HAS WON!
NOT YET YOU HAVEN'T, MASKED MAN!
WHO SAID THAT?!!
WHY NOT JUST TAKE A WILD GUESS?!!
THE HUMAN TORCH! YOU'RE FREE AGAIN! BUT---HOW--??
YOU MEAN THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW?!
LEMME BURN THOSE NUTTY CUFFS OFF YOU, BROTHER-IN-LAW!
NOW THAT MY SWINGIN' STRENGTH'S BACK, I JUST WANT ONE GOOD POKE AT 'IM!
I'LL KEEP HIM BUSY WITH A BOBBING FORCE FIELD, DARLING!
YOU'VE ALL BEEN LIBERATED FROM MY TRAPS! IT-IT CANNOT BE---!
WE SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU, PANTHER ---THE F.F. DOESN'T MAKE A HABIT OF LOSING!
19.

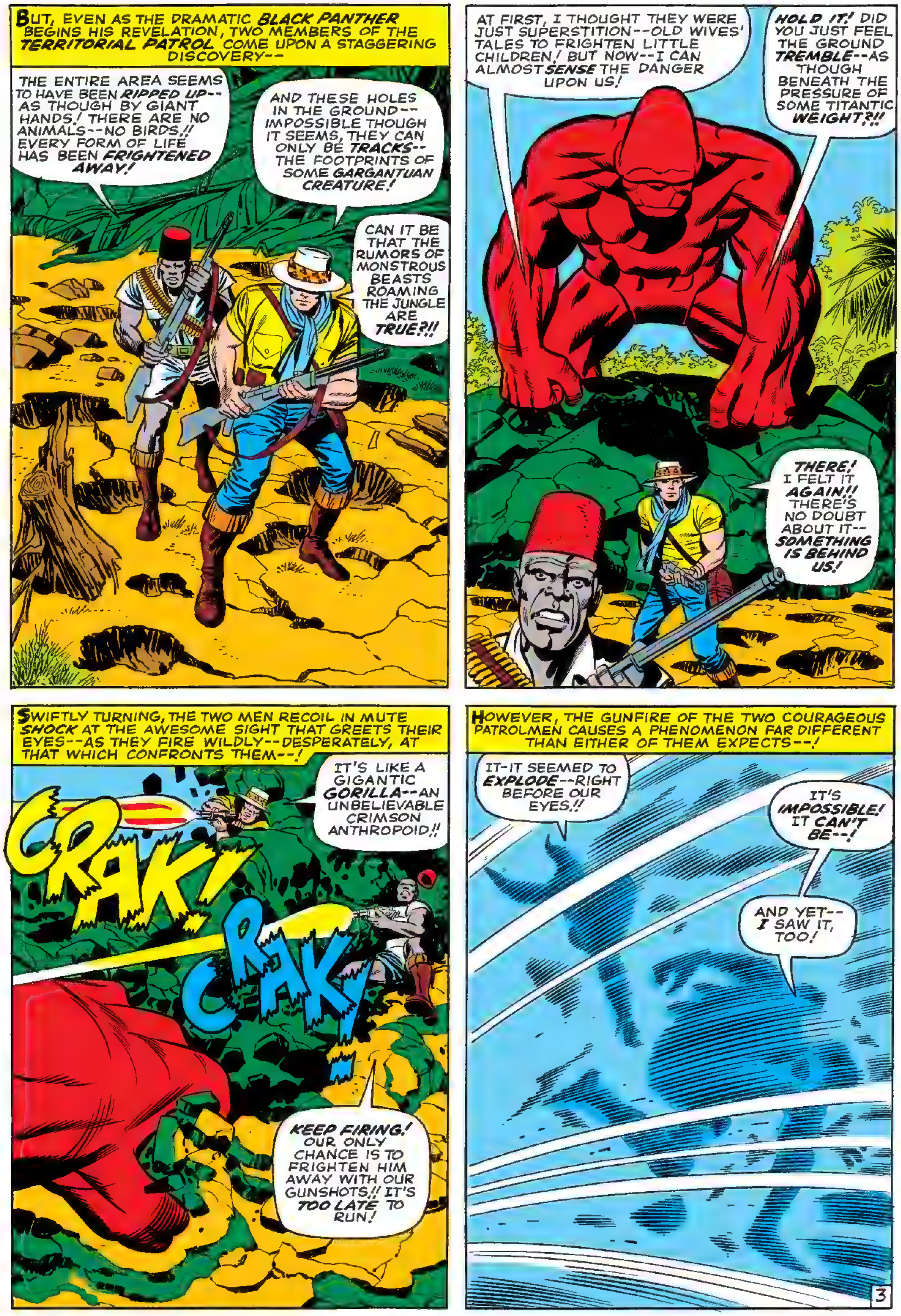


YOU CAN RELEASE YOUR FORCE FIELD NOW, SUE! HE'S LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE... AND, WITHOUT THAT, HE'S NO MATCH FOR US!
C'MON... TAKE A SWING AT ME! YA WANT ME TO GIT FRUSTRATED?!!
SURRENDER, PANTHER! IT'S THE ONLY CHOICE LEFT TO YOU!
HOW? HOW DID YOU DO IT? I MUST KNOW!
IT WAS OL' WYATT! HE FREED ME, AND I FREED THE OTHERS!
YOU TOOK EVERY PRECAUTION AGAINST THE GREATEST SUPER-POWERED TEAM IN THE WORLD...
...BUT, YOU OVER-LOOKED ONE FACTOR! SOMETIMES A MAN WITH NO SUPER POWERS CAN TIP THE SCALES FOR, OR AGAINST YOU!
ORDER YOUR MEN BACK, PANTHER! I DON'T WANT TO HURT ANY OF THEM..!
THEN, MINUTES LATER, AFTER THE MIGHTY, MASKED JUNGLE MYSTERY MAN HAS ACCEPTED THE STARTLING TURN OF FATE..!
WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM NOW?
HE PROMISED NOT TO LAUNCH ANY NEW ATTACK AGAINST US!
WE CAN ALL STAND BACK NOW...
A MAN SUCH AS THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT GIVE HIS WORD LIGHTLY ...NOR DOES HE DISHONOR IT, ONCE GIVEN!
BUT, I THINK YOU MIGHT REMOVE YOUR MASK NOW... AND TELL US WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY..!
MY MASK IS NOT FOR CONCEAL-MENT.. BUT RATHER A SYMBOL OF MY PANTHER POWER!
NOW THAT THE HUNT IS OVER.. THE GAME IS ENDED... I SHALL OFFER YOU THE EXPLANATION... FOR YOU HAVE EARNED IT INDEED!
I AM, AS YOU SEE ME... HEREDITARY CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS... AND PERHAPS THE RICHEST MAN IN ALL THE WORLD!
BUT, IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO! MY TALE IS ONE OF TRAGEDY... AND DEADLY REVENGE..!
NEXT ISSUE: "THE REASON WHY!"
20.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
53 AUG
"THE WAY IT BEGAN!"

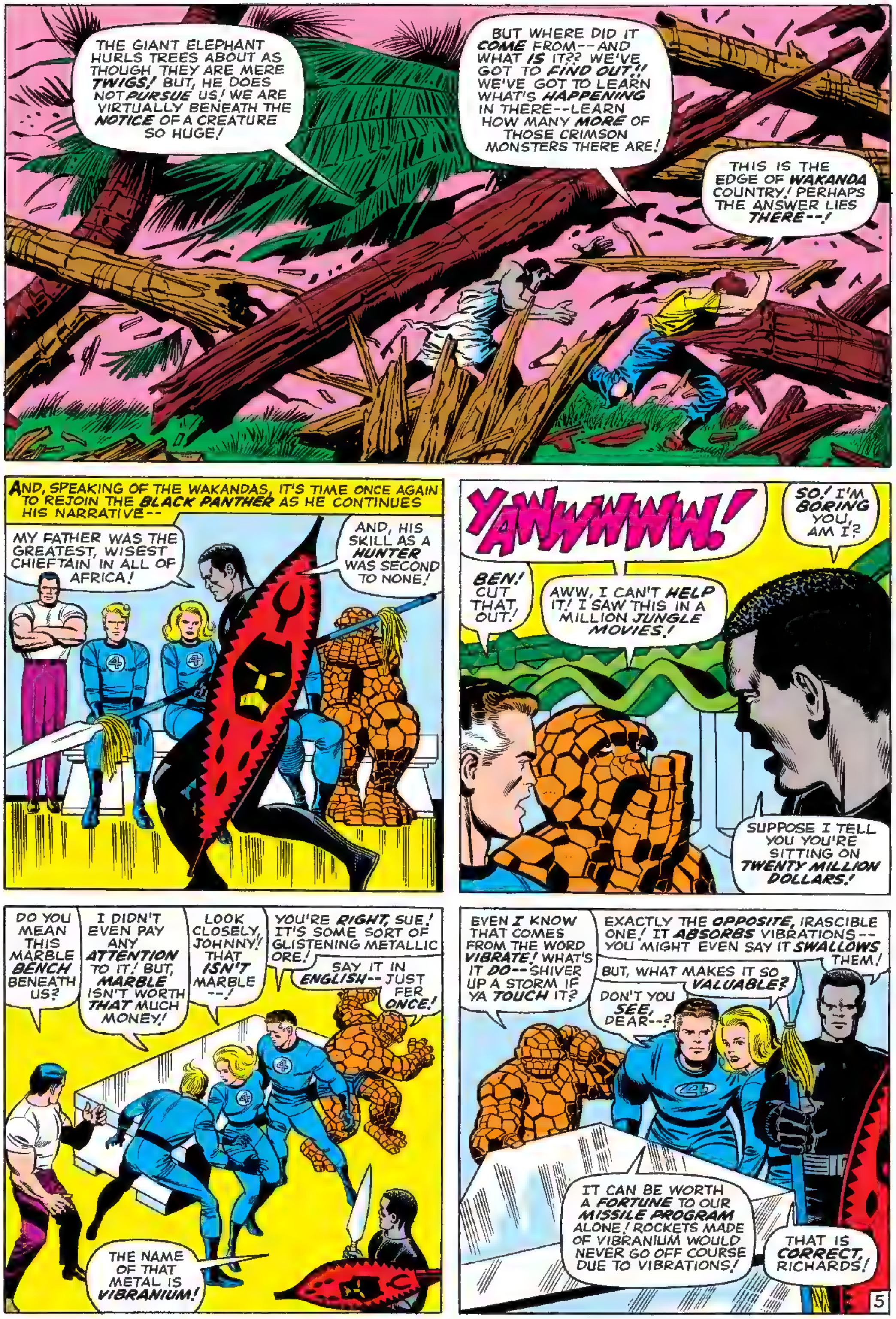
THE FABULOUS F.F. LEARN THE SECRET OF THE BLACK PANTHER
"THE WAY IT BEGAN...!"
HAVING SUCCESSFULLY EVADED ALL THE UNCANNY TRAPS OF THE BLACK PANTHER, THE TRIUMPHANT FANTASTIC FOUR, ACCOMPANIED BY WYATT WINGFOOT, ARE AWARDED A HEROES' CEREMONY---
LET THE DANCE OF FRIENDSHIP BEGIN!
THOUGH THE WAKANDA TRIBE LIVES IN THE TRADITION OF THEIR FOREFATHERS, THEY POSSESS MODERN, SUPER-SCIENTIFIC WONDERS WE CAN ONLY MARVEL AT! THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE MYSTERY HERE--AND ONLY THE BLACK PANTHER HIMSELF KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS!
THEY ARE NOT THE ORDINARY NATIVE TRIBE THEY SEEM TO BE!
SHEESH! A BUNCH'A FRED ASTAIRES THEY AIN'T!
RELAX, BEN! IT'S BETTER'N BEING SHOT AT BY THEM!
SCRIPT: STAN LEE
ART: JACK KIRBY
INKS: JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
NATIVE DANCES: THE BALLET FORBUSH TERPSICHOREAN TROUPE
1

I STILL DON'T GET IT! THEY TOSSED A BUNCH'A SCIENCE-FICTION GIZMOS AT US THAT DOC DOOM WOULD'A BEEN PROUD OF USIN'!
AND NOW THEY'RE ACTIN' LIKE THEY'RE ALL CHARGED UP ON ACCOUNT'A JUST INVENTIN' THE WHEEL!
DON'T WORRY, BEN-- OL' REED WON'T CUT OUT OF HERE TILL HE GETS HIMSELF SOME ANSWERS!
A FAT LOTTA GOOD THAT'LL DO! NOBODY'LL BE ABLE TO UNDER-STAND 'EM EXCEPT HIM!
AWRIGHT, BREAK IT UP--BREAK IT UP! WHAT'RE YA ALL GAPIN' AT, ANYWAY?
AINTCHA NEVER SEEN A BASHFUL, BLUE-EYED THING BEFORE?!!
LET'S GO, BEN! THE BLACK PANTHER IS INVITING US TO HIS PRIVATE QUARTERS!
WOW! WOTTA PAD! I'LL BET EVEN HUGH HEFNER COULDN'T IMPROVE ON THIS LAYOUT!
MAN! IF YA GOTTA LIVE IN THE JUNGLE, THIS SURE IS THE WAY TA DO IT! THERE MUST BE A LOTTA DOUGH IN BLACK PANTHERIN'!
STILL ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE OLD AND THE NEW, DARLING! LOOK AT THAT ELABORATE STEREO MUSIC SYSTEM--COMPLETE WITH TAPE RECORDER!
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE!
MY GUESTS AND I DO NOT WISH TO BE DISTURBED!
YOU SEEM PUZZLED BY WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN! YOU SHOULDN'T BE!
AFTER ALL, I CAN AFFORD TO PAMPER MYSELF--TO INDULGE MY EVERY WHIM--ENJOY EVERY LUXURY! I'M ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN IN THE WORLD!
REMEMBER, I'VE SEEN, I BELIEVE YOU! BUT, THERE'S MORE TO YOUR STORY THAN MERE WEALTH--
YOU ARE PERCEPTIVE INDEED, RICHARDS!
ACTUALLY, THE BLACK PANTHER LIVES UNDER A TRAGIC CURSE!
BUT, MY TALE REALLY BEGINS WITH THE SPEAR AND SHIELD OF MY FATHER--T'CHAKA, THE WARRIOR KING!
2



BUT, EVEN AS THE DRAMATIC BLACK PANTHER BEGINS HIS REVELATION, TWO MEMBERS OF THE TERRITORIAL PATROL COME UPON A STAGGERING DISCOVERY--
THE ENTIRE AREA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RIPPED UP-- AS THOUGH BY GIANT HANDS! THERE ARE NO ANIMALS--NO BIRDS!! EVERY FORM OF LIFE HAS BEEN FRIGHTENED AWAY!
AND THESE HOLES IN THE GROUND-- IMPOSSIBLE THOUGH IT SEEMS, THEY CAN ONLY BE TRACKS-- THE FOOTPRINTS OF SOME GARGANTUAN CREATURE!
CAN IT BE THAT THE RUMORS OF MONSTROUS BEASTS ROAMING THE JUNGLE ARE TRUE?!!
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST SUPERSTITION--OLD WIVES' TALES TO FRIGHTEN LITTLE CHILDREN! BUT NOW--I CAN ALMOST SENSE THE DANGER UPON US!
HOLD IT! DID YOU JUST FEEL THE GROUND TREMBLE--AS THOUGH BENEATH THE PRESSURE OF SOME TITANTIC WEIGHT?!!
THERE! I FELT IT AGAIN!! THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT-- SOMETHING IS BEHIND US!
SWIFTLY TURNING, THE TWO MEN RECOIL IN MUTE SHOCK AT THE AWESOME SIGHT THAT GREETS THEIR EYES--AS THEY FIRE WILDLY--DESPERATELY, AT THAT WHICH CONFRONTS THEM--!
IT'S LIKE A GIGANTIC GORILLA--AN UNBELIEVABLE CRIMSON ANTHROPOID!!
CRAK!
CRAK!
KEEP FIRING! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO FRIGHTEN HIM AWAY WITH OUR GUNSHOTS!! IT'S TOO LATE TO RUN!
HOWEVER, THE GUNFIRE OF THE TWO COURAGEOUS PATROLMEN CAUSES A PHENOMENON FAR DIFFERENT THAN EITHER OF THEM EXPECTS--!
IT-IT SEEMED TO EXPLODE--RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT CAN'T BE--!
AND YET-- I SAW IT, TOO!
3

THIS IS FAR STRANGER THAN ANYTHING WE EXPECTED!! MUCH BIGGER THAN THE TWO OF US CAN HANDLE!
YOU'RE RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE OUTPOST--REPORT IT TO HEADQUARTERS!
BOK!
RRRR!
LISTEN! BEHIND US--THAT NOISE--FAR LOUDER THAN BEFORE!!
PERHAPS THE RED GORILLA HAS RETURN---! NO! LOOK!
IT'S EVEN BIGGER THAN THE GORILLA--MORE POWERFUL--MORE DANGEROUS!!
RRRRRRRRRRRRRR
IT CANNOT BE!! THERE ARE NO SUCH BEASTS!! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE! WE MUST BE GOING MAD!
I ALMOST WISH THAT WERE THE ANSWER--BUT WE BOTH KNOW WE SEE IT!
THERE IS MUCH MADNESS HERE--BUT, IT DOES NOT LIE WITH US!
4


THE GIANT ELEPHANT HURLS TREES ABOUT AS THOUGH THEY ARE MERE TWIGS! BUT, HE DOES NOT PURSUE US! WE ARE VIRTUALLY BENEATH THE NOTICE OF A CREATURE SO HUGE!
BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM-- AND WHAT IS IT?? WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT!! WE'VE GOT TO LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE--LEARN HOW MANY MORE OF THOSE CRIMSON MONSTERS THERE ARE!
THIS IS THE EDGE OF WAKANDA COUNTRY! PERHAPS THE ANSWER LIES THERE--!
AND, SPEAKING OF THE WAKANDAS, IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO REJOIN THE BLACK PANTHER AS HE CONTINUES HIS NARRATIVE--
MY FATHER WAS THE GREATEST, WISEST CHIEFTAIN IN ALL OF AFRICA!
AND, HIS SKILL AS A HUNTER WAS SECOND TO NONE!
YAWWWWW!
SO! I'M BORING YOU, AM I?
BEN! CUT THAT OUT!
AWW, I CAN'T HELP IT! I SAW THIS IN A MILLION JUNGLE MOVIES!
SUPPOSE I TELL YOU YOU'RE SITTING ON TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS!
DO YOU MEAN THIS MARBLE BENCH BENEATH US?
I DIDN'T EVEN PAY ANY ATTENTION TO IT! BUT, MARBLE ISN'T WORTH THAT MUCH MONEY!
LOOK CLOSELY, JOHNNY! THAT ISN'T MARBLE--!
YOU'RE RIGHT, SUE! IT'S SOME SORT OF GLISTENING METALLIC ORE!
SAY IT IN ENGLISH-- JUST FER ONCE!
THE NAME OF THAT METAL IS VIBRANIUM!
EVEN I KNOW THAT COMES FROM THE WORD VIBRATE! WHAT'S IT DO--SHIVER UP A STORM IF YA TOUCH IT?
EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE, IRASCIBLE ONE! IT ABSORBS VIBRATIONS--YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY IT SWALLOWS THEM!
BUT, WHAT MAKES IT SO VALUABLE?
DON'T YOU SEE, DEAR--?
IT CAN BE WORTH A FORTUNE TO OUR MISSILE PROGRAM ALONE! ROCKETS MADE OF VIBRANIUM WOULD NEVER GO OFF COURSE DUE TO VIBRATIONS!
THAT IS CORRECT, RICHARDS!
5

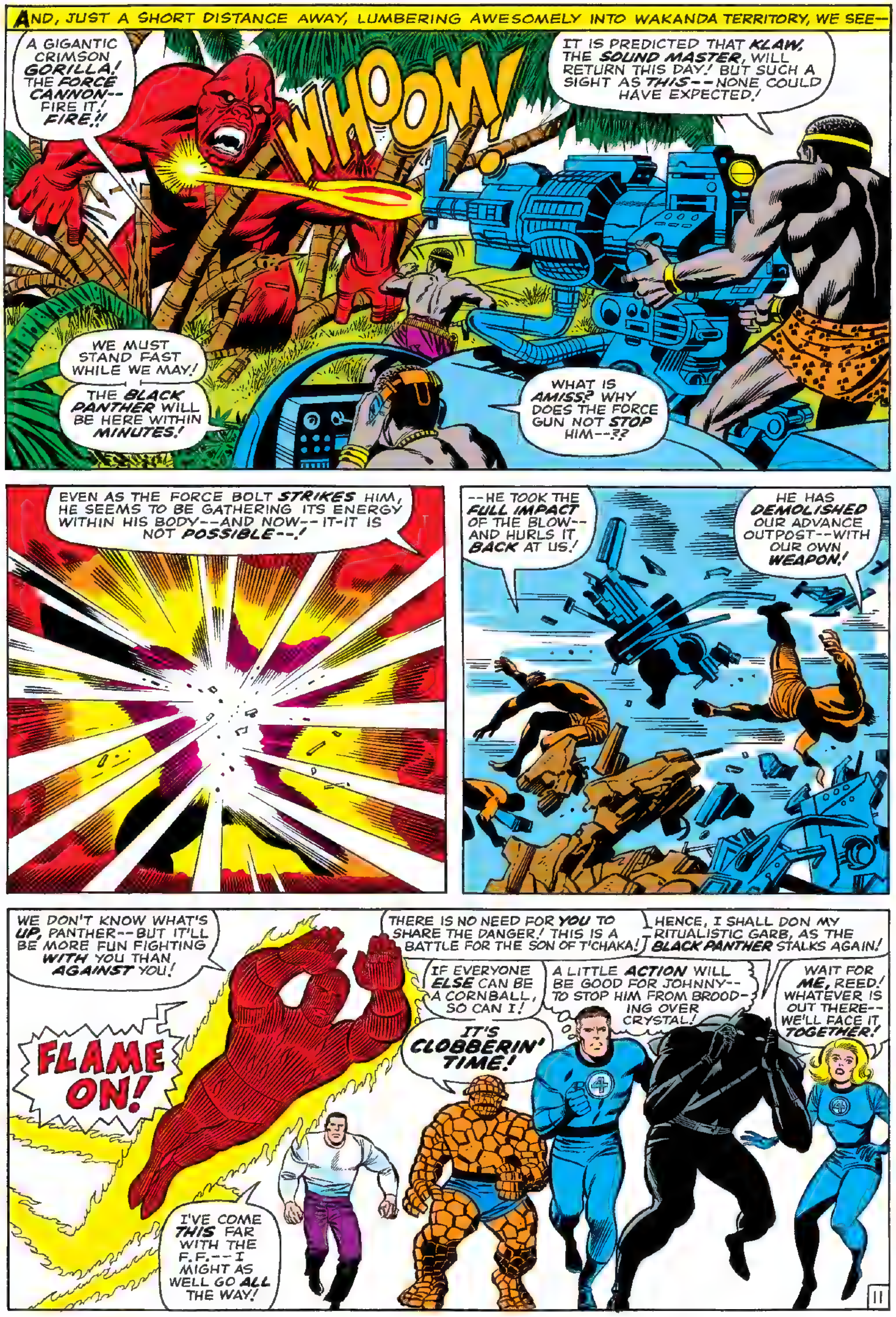
OUR VIRTUALLY INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF VIBRANIUM COMES FROM THAT SACRED MOUND WHICH HAS BORDERED THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME!
EVERY WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN IS PLEDGED TO PROTECT THE SACRED VIBRANIUM WITH HIS LIFE--JUST AS MY FATHER WAS SO PLEDGED!
ALL HAIL T'CHAKA--GUARDIAN OF THE ETERNAL PEAK!
"MY FATHER WAS THE GREATEST CHIEFTAIN OF ALL! WISE IN COUNCIL--JUST IN JUDGEMENT--AND BRAVE IN BATTLE!"
"WHEREVER THERE WAS DANGER, THERE TOO WAS T'CHAKA--ALWAYS IN THE FOREFRONT--!"
"TO ME, HE WAS MORE THAN FATHER--MORE THAN WARRIOR--TO ME, HE WAS LIKE A GOD!"
ONE DAY I TOO SHALL BE CHIEFTAIN, FATHER!
AND I SHALL BE WORTHY OF ALL YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME!
BUT NOW, IT IS BEDTIME FOR THE LITTLEST CHIEFTAIN OF ALL!
LOOK, KIDDO--WHY DON'TCHA SAVE YERSELF THE TROUBLE? I KNOW THE REST BY HEART! EVERYTHING WUZ HUNKY DORY UNTIL THE GREEDY IVORY HUNTERS MADE THE SCENE!
BEN! FOR THE LAST TIME, WILL YOU REMEMBER THAT WE'RE HIS GUESTS?!
DO NOT BE CONCERNED, REED RICHARDS! I REALIZE MY TALE MAY SOUND CONTRIVED TO YOU!
YOU AINT JUST WHISTLIN' WATUSI, PAL!
YER TALKIN' TO A GUY WHO SEEN EVERY TARZAN MOVIE AT LEAST A DOZEN TIMES! AND I CAN RECITE YA HALF'A THE BOMBA, THE JUNGLE BOY BOOKS BY HEART!
SO YER LITTLE BEDTIME STORY AINT IMPRESSIN' ME! LET'S GIT TO THE PUNCHLINE, HUH?
THAT'S ENOUGH, BEN!
6

I DO NOT MIND THE THING'S INTERRUPTIONS!
PERHAPS MY TALE DOES FOLLOW THE USUAL PATTERN, EXCEPT FOR ONE THING! IT WAS NOT A GREEDY IVORY HUNTER WHO CAME TO OUR LAND! NO, IT WAS ONE FAR MORE DANGEROUS--FAR MORE EVIL--!
HE CALLED HIMSELF KLAW, THE MASTER OF SOUND! --AND HE POSSESSED A WEAPON THE LIKE OF WHICH NO MAN HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE--A WEAPON WHICH COULD CONVERT SOUND INTO MASS!
THE FOOLS! THEY MOCKED ME WHEN I SAID THAT VIBRANIUM EXISTED! BUT NOW I HAVE FOUND IT, HERE IN THIS JUNGLE--AND, IT MUST BE MINE!
VIBRANIUM!! THE ONE ELEMENT I NEED--THE ONE ELEMENT WHICH WILL POWER MY SOUND TRANSFORMER--SO THAT I MAY CHANGE THE BASIC ENERGY OF SOUND INTO ANY LIVING FORM I DESIRE!
"I STILL REMEMBER THE SIGHT OF KLAW, THE UNSMILING--KLAW, THE MERCILESS--ORDERING MY FATHER TO GIVE UP OUR SACRED MOUND--OUR PRECIOUS ETERNAL ROCK--!"
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE! ONCE I GAIN POSSESSION OF THE WORLD'S ONLY SUPPLY OF VIBRANIUM, ALL THE RICHES OF EARTH SHALL BE MINE!
BEGONE! THIS LAND IS OURS! SO SPEAKS T'CHAKA, THE CHIEFTAIN!
THEN T'CHAKA SHALL SPEAK NO MORE!
GUN HIM DOWN--NOW!
"IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE--A SOUND I WAS TO REMEMBER ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE--!"
CRACK! CRACK!
FATHER!! FATHER!
THEY HAVE SLAIN T'CHAKA!
BUT, HIS DEATH SHALL BE AVENGED!

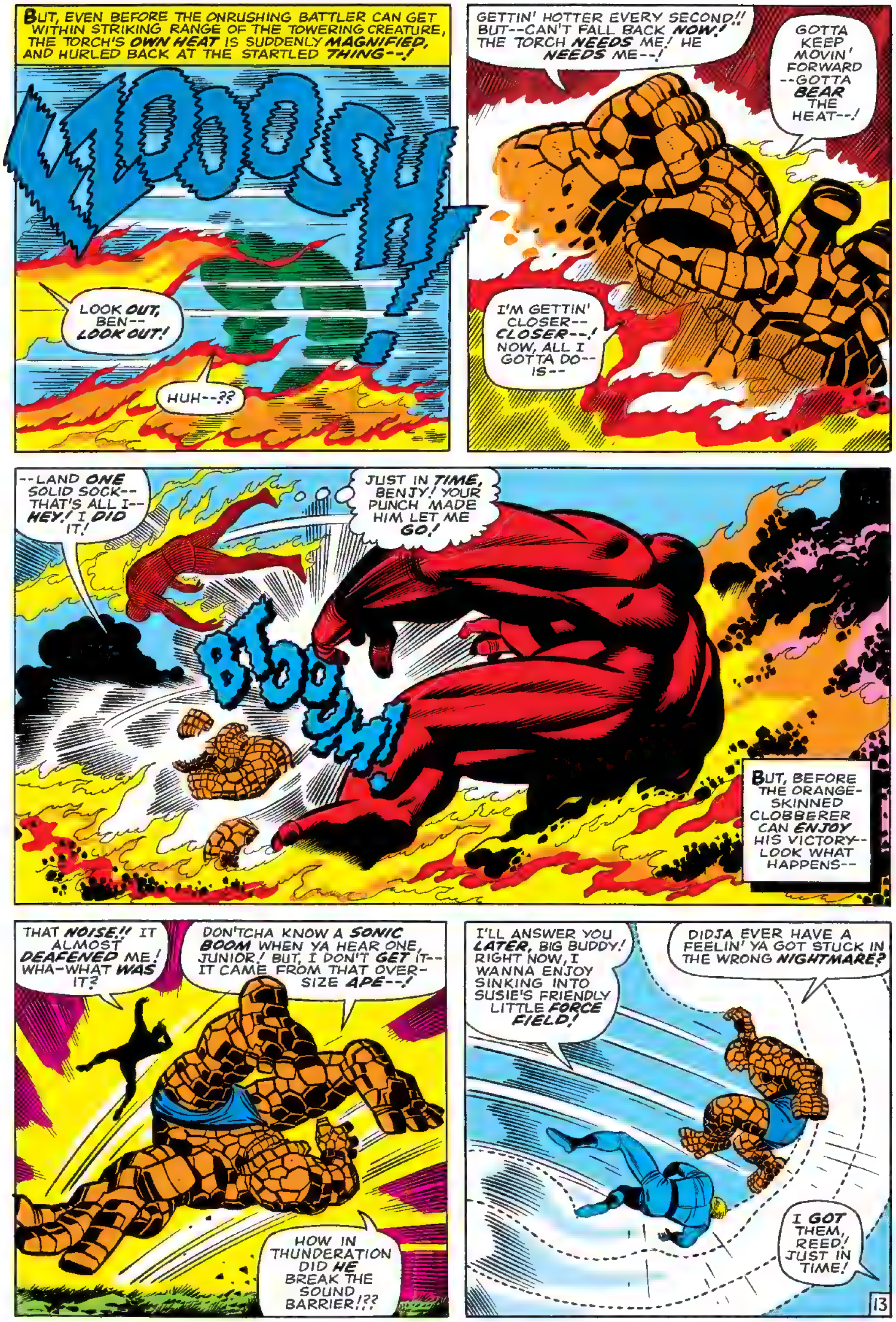
"I, WHO HAD LIVED IN THE JUNGLE SINCE BIRTH, HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH VIOLENCE AS I BEHELD THAT MOMENT--WHILE THE MACHINE-GUN FIRE OF KLAW FELL UPON OUR WARRIORS WITHOUT MERCY--!"
WE ARE HELPLESS BEFORE THE WITHERING FIRE OF THE INVADERS!!
FLEE, MY BRAVE ONES-- FLEE! WE MUST LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY!
"BUT, OVER THE NOISE OF THE GUNFIRE--ONE SOUND KEPT ROARING IN MY ANGUISHED BRAIN--THE SOUND OF A NAME--A NAME I WOULD HATE FOR ALL ETERNITY--! THE NAME OF--KLAW!"
WE GOT 'EM, KLAW! THEY'RE ON THE RUN! THE MOUND IS OURS!
IT'S MINE! MINE ALONE! IT BELONGS TO KLAW! ONLY TO KLAW!
JUST AS ALL THE WORLD WILL ONE DAY BE MINE!
"SECONDS LATER, THE FIRING HAD CEASED--BUT, THE DEADLY SILENCE WHICH FOLLOWED WAS MORE DEAFENING--MORE FRAUGHT WITH DREAD--THAN ALL THE THUNDER THAT HAD GONE BEFORE!"
FATHER!
MY FATHER--!
"IN THAT SPLIT-SECOND, MY BOYHOOD ENDED--AS THE NEW CHIEFTAIN OF ALL THE WAKANDAS WAS BORN--!"
FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH--I LIVE WITH BUT ONE THOUGHT--ONE AIM--ONE GOAL!! THIS DEED MUST BE AVENGED! KLAW SHALL PAY--IN FULL MEASURE!
I SHALL BE AS STRONG--AND AS FEARLESS--AS THE SACRED BLACK PANTHER!!* THIS DO I SWEAR TO T'CHAKA--MY FATHER WHO IS NO MORE!
*TO THE MALE WAKANDIAN, THE BLACK PANTHER REPRESENTS A FIGURATIVE GOD IMAGE, AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE A SACRED BEING--AS THE COW IS VENERATED IN INDIA! --RELIGIOUS FANATIC STAN.
"SUDDENLY, I HEARD THE SOUND OF A MAN MUTTERING BEHIND ME! SILENTLY, WITH A SEETHING RAGE IN MY HEART, I TURNED--"
KLAW WOULD HAVE MY HIDE IF HE KNEW I ALMOST FORGOT HIS SOUND-BLASTER! I BETTER GET IT OVER TO HIM WHILE I CAN!
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THAT OBJECT IS--BUT IT SHALL NEVER FIND ITS WAY BACK TO THE EVIL ONE!
THERE! THE FIRST BLOW HAS BEEN STRUCK AGAINST KLAW! THE FIRST OF MANY THAT SHALL ENDLESSLY FOLLOW, UNTIL HE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED!
NOW I MUST HASTEN AFTER HIM--WHILE THERE STILL IS TIME--!
8

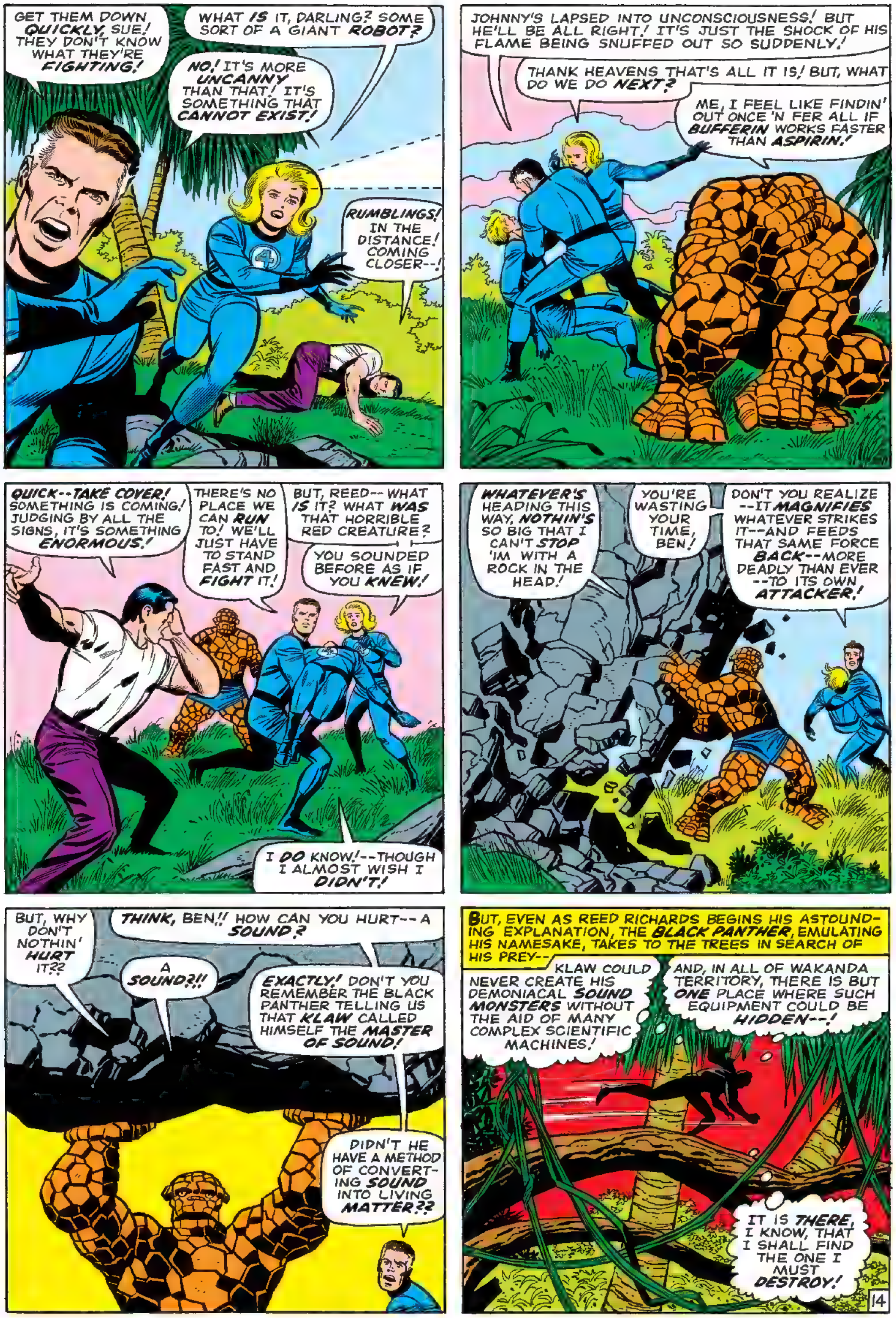
"FINDING THE STRANGE WEAPON SURPRISINGLY LIGHT IN WEIGHT, I LIFTED IT, CARRYING IT WITH ME, UNTIL I REACHED THE GATES OF OUR VILLAGE, WHERE MY EYES BEHELD KLAW'S FINAL ACT OF VILLAINY--!"
MY PEOPLE-- FLEEING FOR THEIR LIVES!! OUR VILLAGE IN FLAMES!!
THIS IS NO MAN I SEEK TO BATTLE!! TRULY, HE IS EVIL INCARNATE!! HIS VERY PRESENCE BEFOULS THE EARTH UPON WHICH HE STANDS!
OUT! DRIVE THEM OUT! THE MOUND OF VIBRANIUM MUST BELONG TO KLAW! ONLY I AM DESTINED TO BE SUPREME! ONLY I AM MASTER OF SOUND!
"WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT, I AIMED THE FEARSOME OBJECT IN MY ARMS DIRECTLY AHEAD OF ME --WHILE MY FINGER BEGAN TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER, AS I CRIED--"
YOU HAVE SLAIN MY FATHER! YOU HAVE PUT THE TORCH TO OUR VILLAGE! AND NOW YOU MUST PAY--!
THE SOUND BLASTER!! HE'S ABOUT TO FIRE IT!
STOP HIM! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING--!!
TOO LATE! HE DETONATED IT!
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO AIM IT! THE SHOT FELL SHORT!
ZAK!
I'LL MAKE SURE HE GETS NO SECOND CHANCE!
YOU LITTLE FOOL! YOU CANNOT REALIZE THE FORCES YOU ARE TAMPERING WITH! THE DEVICE YOU HOLD CONVERTS SOUND INTO PURE ENERGY! IN THE WRONG HANDS, IT CAN WREAK UNMENTIONABLE HAVOC!!
YOURS ARE THE HANDS THAT ARE WRONG, EVIL ONE--NOT MINE!
LOOK OUT! HE'S GONNA FIRE AGAIN!
THE LITTLE SAVAGE WOULDN'T DARE!
I SEE YOU STARTING TO SQUEEZE YOUR TRIGGER! BUT, YOU ARE TOO LATE--!
THIS IS FOR T'CHAKA-- THE WARRIOR KING!
MY HAND!
ZAK
9

RUN, KLAW--RUN! IT'S CERTAIN DEATH TO REMAIN HERE--WHILE HE HOLDS THE SOUND BLASTER!
BUT--THE VIBRANIUM!! I CAN'T GO WITHOUT THE VIBRANIUM--!!
YOU'LL HAVE TO! WE'RE NOT STAYING TO DIG IT UP FOR YOU! WE WANNA LIVE!
YOU'VE SHATTERED MY HAND--LOST ME MY MEN--BUT I'LL RETURN! THE VIBRANIUM WILL YET BE MINE!
THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO--TO THE DAY!
I COULD NOT THEN PURSUE HIM, FOR THE SHOCK OF FIRING THOSE TWO MIGHTY BURSTS HAD DRAINED MY YOUTHFUL STRENGTH!
BUT, I KNOW HE WILL RETURN--I CAN SENSE THAT THE TIME HAS COME!
AND THIS TIME--I SHALL BE READY!
Y'KNOW--THAT STORY'S JUST PLAIN NUTTY ENUFF TO BE TRUE!
IT IS TRUE! I SOLD SMALL PORTIONS OF VIBRANIUM TO VARIOUS SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS, ENABLING ME TO AMASS A FORTUNE--THE EQUAL OF ANY ON EARTH!
SO THAT'S HOW YA COULD AFFORD THAT FAR-OUT MECHANIZED JUNGLE OF YOURS!
THAT? I JUST DID IT FOR A LARK!
IT WAS A SIMPLE EXERCISE, TO TEST MY SKILL--FOR I HAD ATTENDED THE FINE UNIVERSITIES OF BOTH HEMISPHERES!
HOW ABOUT YER PANTHER POWER--THE WAY YA SEE IN THE DARK, 'N STUFF--!
A SECRET--HANDED DOWN FROM CHIEFTAIN TO CHIEFTAIN!
WE EAT CERTAIN HERBS--AND UNDERGO RIGOROUS RITUALS--OF WHICH I AM FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK!
BUT, WHY THE HECK DIDJA TRY TO TRAP US?!!
I HAD TO! YOU FOUR WERE THE SUPREME TEST!
IF I COULD FIGHT YOU TO A STANDSTILL, THEN I AM READY FOR--KLAW!
ALTHOUGH HE HAS KEPT HIDDEN FROM ME ALL THESE YEARS, I KNOW HE IS PLANNING TO--
WAIT!!
IT HAS COME! THE LONG AWAITED, CRITICAL DANGER SIGNAL!!
WHEEEE
WHEEEEE
WHEEEEE
WHEEEEE
CLICK
NOW WHAT?
WOTTA DEAL! YA MOVE ONE OF THEM CRAZY PANTHER STATUES, AND THE WHOLE BLASTED WALL SLIDES BACK!
QUIET! THIS SENSA-SCOPE IS RECORDING THE APPROACH OF A NAMELESS MENACE--FROM THE DIRECTION OF OUR SACRED MOUND!
KLAW HAS RETURNED!

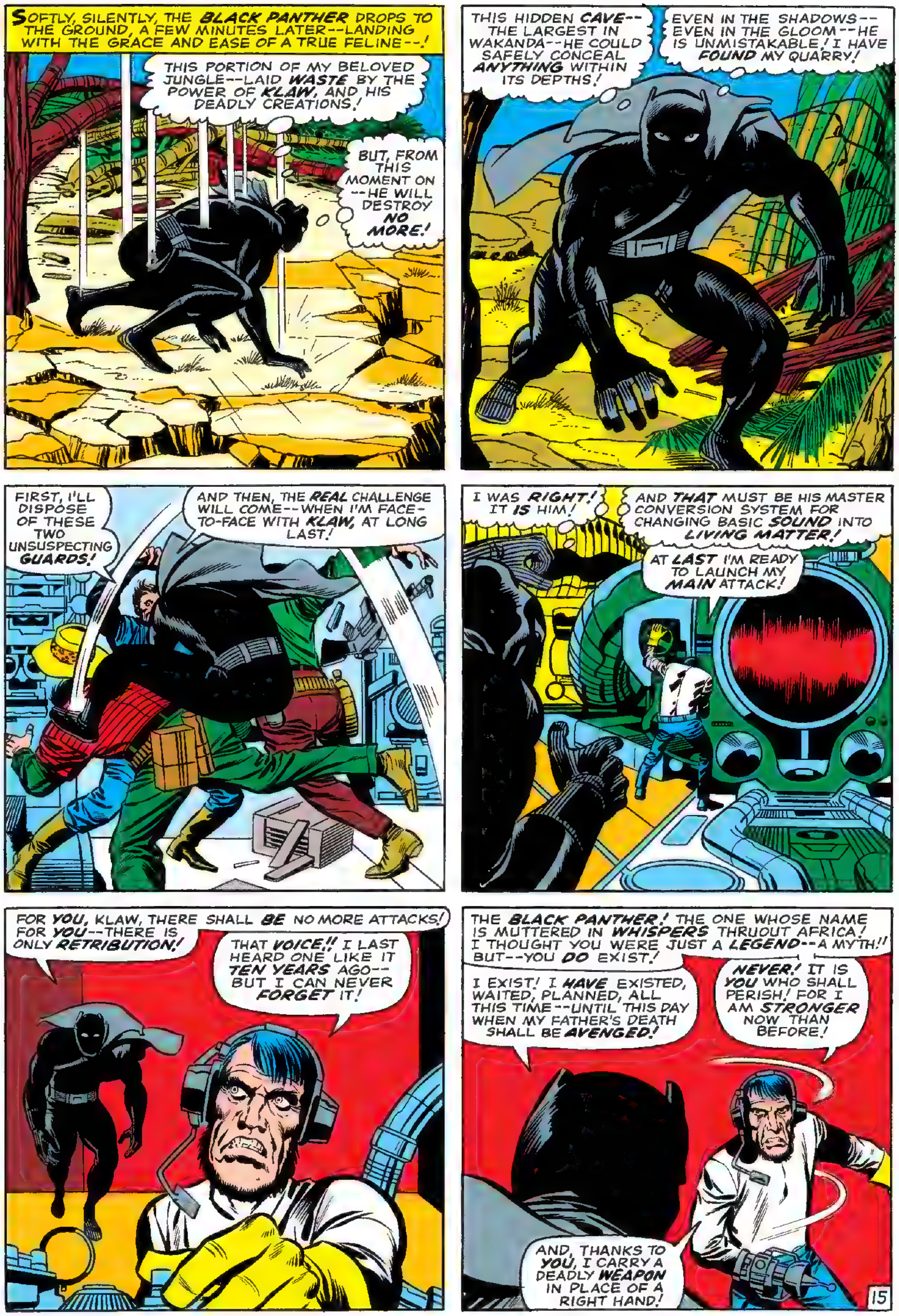

AND, JUST A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, LUMBERING AWESOMELY INTO WAKANDA TERRITORY, WE SEE--
A GIGANTIC CRIMSON GORILLA! THE FORCE CANNON-- FIRE IT! FIRE!!
WHOOM!
IT IS PREDICTED THAT KLAW, THE SOUND MASTER, WILL RETURN THIS DAY! BUT SUCH A SIGHT AS THIS-- NONE COULD HAVE EXPECTED!
WE MUST STAND FAST WHILE WE MAY!
THE BLACK PANTHER WILL BE HERE WITHIN MINUTES!
WHAT IS AMISS? WHY DOES THE FORCE GUN NOT STOP HIM--??
EVEN AS THE FORCE BOLT STRIKES HIM, HE SEEMS TO BE GATHERING ITS ENERGY WITHIN HIS BODY--AND NOW-- IT-IT IS NOT POSSIBLE--!
--HE TOOK THE FULL IMPACT OF THE BLOW-- AND HURLS IT BACK AT US!
HE HAS DEMOLISHED OUR ADVANCE OUTPOST--WITH OUR OWN WEAPON!
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S UP, PANTHER--BUT IT'LL BE MORE FUN FIGHTING WITH YOU THAN AGAINST YOU!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO SHARE THE DANGER! THIS IS A BATTLE FOR THE SON OF T'CHAKA!
HENCE, I SHALL DON MY RITUALISTIC GARB, AS THE BLACK PANTHER STALKS AGAIN!
IF EVERYONE ELSE CAN BE A CORNBALL, SO CAN I!
A LITTLE ACTION WILL BE GOOD FOR JOHNNY-- TO STOP HIM FROM BROODING OVER CRYSTAL!
WAIT FOR ME, REED! WHATEVER IS OUT THERE-- WE'LL FACE IT TOGETHER!
FLAME ON!
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
I'VE COME THIS FAR WITH THE F.F.--I MIGHT AS WELL GO ALL THE WAY!
11

SECONDS LATER, AS THE TORCH IS FIRST TO REACH THE GIGANTIC CRIMSON MONSTER--
WHAT CAN IT BE? IT'S SHAPED LIKE A GORILLA--BUT IT'S HAIRLESS--AND COLORED RED--AND LOOK AT THE SIZE OF IT--!
BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, THE FIERY YOUTH COMES TO A STARTLING REALIZATION--
HE SEEMS ALIVE--BUT HE ISN'T! HE CAN'T BE!
EVERY BEAST THAT LIVES FEARS MY FLAME--BUT HE DOESN'T!
AT THAT MOMENT...
LOOKA THAT, STRETCH! THEY MUST BE FILMIN' A NEW KING KONG!
BUT WHO EVER HEARD OF A RED, HAIRLESS GORILLA?
IT'S NOT A GORILLA, BEN! IT'S SOMETHING FAR MORE DANGEROUS!
WHAT DARLING? WHAT IS IT??
WHAT'SA DIFFERENCE? I'M GOIN' AFTER 'IM!
ANYTHING'S BETTER'N STAYIN' THERE 'N LISTENIN' TO ANOTHER ONE OF BIG DOME'S EXPLANATIONS!
BEN--STAY BACK! YOU CAN'T HURT HIM! LOOK HOW HE IGNORES MY FLAME!
FLAME, SHMAME! NOW WE'LL SEE IF HE CAN IGNORE A FISTFUL O' KNUCKLES!
NOBODY'S MAKIN' AN ACCORDION OUTTA MY LITTLE BUDDY!
I GOTTA MOVE FAST! NO TELLIN' WHAT HE MIGHT DO TO THE KID!
12

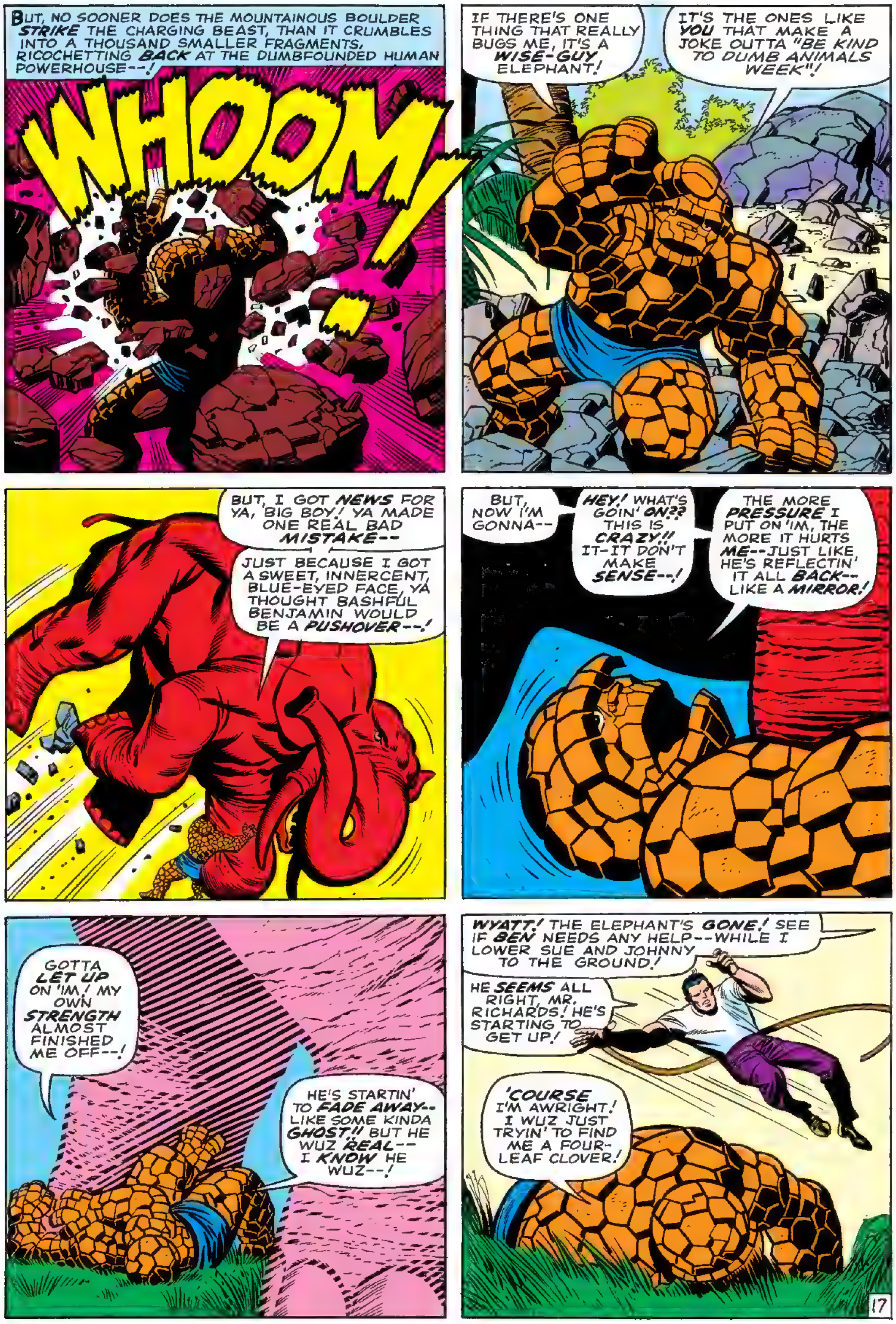

BUT, EVEN BEFORE THE ONRUSHING BATTLER CAN GET WITHIN STRIKING RANGE OF THE TOWERING CREATURE, THE TORCH'S OWN HEAT IS SUDDENLY MAGNIFIED, AND HURLED BACK AT THE STARTLED THING--!
ZZOOOSH!
LOOK OUT, BEN-- LOOK OUT!
HUH--??
GETTIN' HOTTER EVERY SECOND!! BUT--CAN'T FALL BACK NOW! THE TORCH NEEDS ME! HE NEEDS ME--!
GOTTA KEEP MOVIN' FORWARD --GOTTA BEAR THE HEAT--!
I'M GETTIN' CLOSER-- CLOSER--! NOW, ALL I GOTTA DO-- IS--
--LAND ONE SOLID SOCK-- THAT'S ALL I-- HEY! I DID IT!
JUST IN TIME, BENJY! YOUR PUNCH MADE HIM LET ME GO!
BTOOOM!
BUT, BEFORE THE ORANGE-SKINNED CLOBBERER CAN ENJOY HIS VICTORY-- LOOK WHAT HAPPENS--
THAT NOISE!! IT ALMOST DEAFENED ME! WHA-WHAT WAS IT?
DON'TCHA KNOW A SONIC BOOM WHEN YA HEAR ONE, JUNIOR! BUT, I DON'T GET IT-- IT CAME FROM THAT OVER-SIZE APE--!
HOW IN THUNDERATION DID HE BREAK THE SOUND BARRIER!??
I'LL ANSWER YOU LATER, BIG BUDDY! RIGHT NOW, I WANNA ENJOY SINKING INTO SUSIE'S FRIENDLY LITTLE FORCE FIELD!
DIDJA EVER HAVE A FEELIN' YA GOT STUCK IN THE WRONG NIGHTMARE?
I GOT THEM, REED! JUST IN TIME!
13

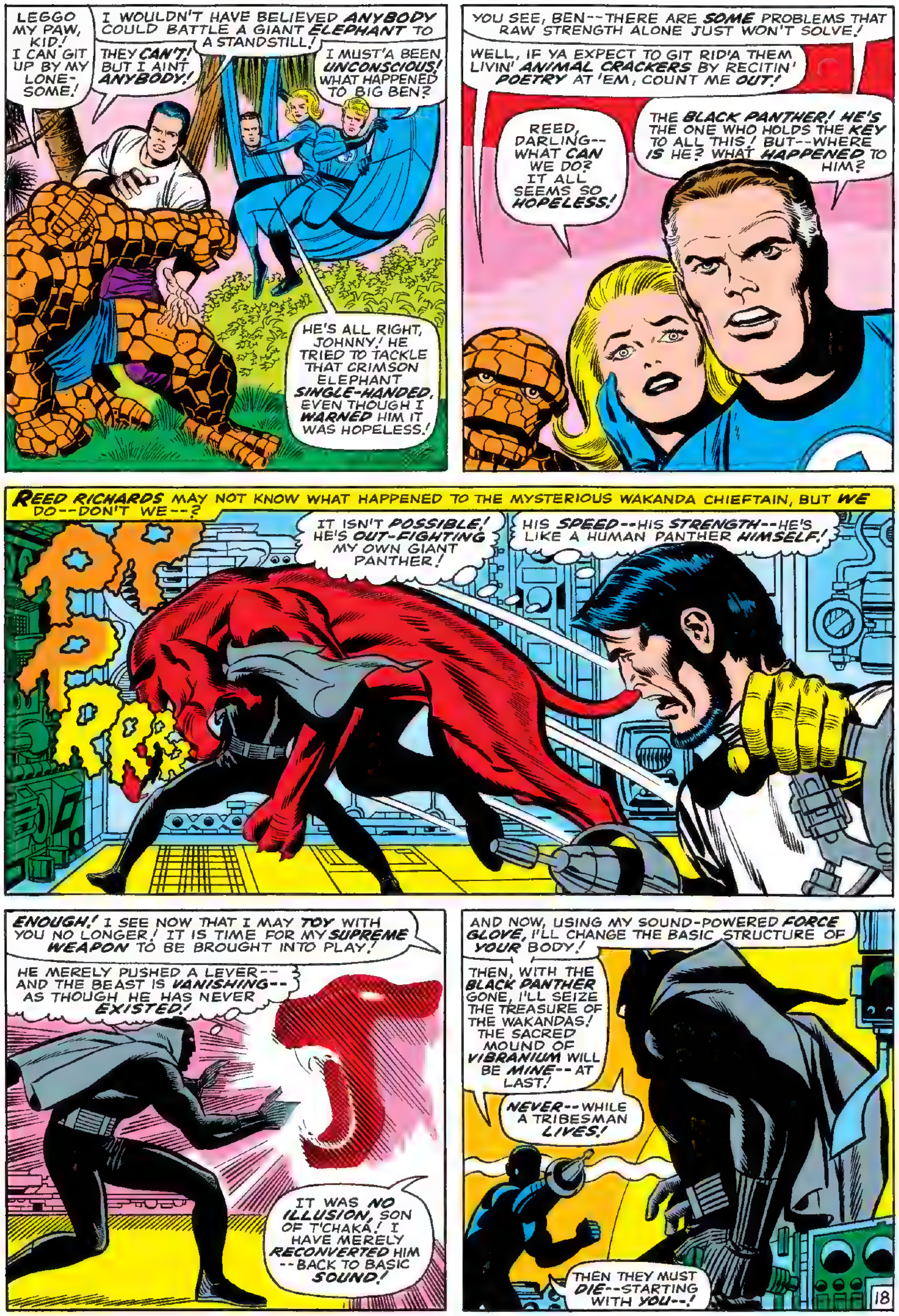


GET THEM DOWN QUICKLY, SUE! THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE FIGHTING!
WHAT IS IT, DARLING? SOME SORT OF A GIANT ROBOT?
NO! IT'S MORE UNCANNY THAN THAT! IT'S SOMETHING THAT CANNOT EXIST!
RUMBLINGS! IN THE DISTANCE! COMING CLOSER--!
JOHNNY'S LAPSED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS! BUT HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT! IT'S JUST THE SHOCK OF HIS FLAME BEING SNUFFED OUT SO SUDDENLY!
THANK HEAVENS THAT'S ALL IT IS! BUT, WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?
ME, I FEEL LIKE FINDIN' OUT ONCE 'N FER ALL IF BUFFERIN WORKS FASTER THAN ASPIRIN!
QUICK--TAKE COVER! SOMETHING IS COMING! JUDGING BY ALL THE SIGNS, IT'S SOMETHING ENORMOUS!
THERE'S NO PLACE WE CAN RUN TO! WE'LL JUST HAVE TO STAND FAST AND FIGHT IT!
BUT, REED-- WHAT IS IT? WHAT WAS THAT HORRIBLE RED CREATURE?
YOU SOUNDED BEFORE AS IF YOU KNEW!
I DO KNOW!--THOUGH I ALMOST WISH I DIDN'T!
WHATEVER'S HEADING THIS WAY, NOTHIN'S SO BIG THAT I CAN'T STOP 'IM WITH A ROCK IN THE HEAD!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, BEN!
DON'T YOU REALIZE --IT MAGNIFIES WHATEVER STRIKES IT--AND FEEDS THAT SAME FORCE BACK--MORE DEADLY THAN EVER --TO ITS OWN ATTACKER!
BUT, WHY DON'T NOTHIN' HURT IT??
THINK, BEN!! HOW CAN YOU HURT-- A SOUND?
A SOUND?!!
EXACTLY! DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE BLACK PANTHER TELLING US THAT KLAW CALLED HIMSELF THE MASTER OF SOUND!
DIDN'T HE HAVE A METHOD OF CONVERTING SOUND INTO LIVING MATTER??
BUT, EVEN AS REED RICHARDS BEGINS HIS ASTOUNDING EXPLANATION, THE BLACK PANTHER, EMULATING HIS NAMESAKE, TAKES TO THE TREES IN SEARCH OF HIS PREY--
KLAW COULD NEVER CREATE HIS DEMONIACAL SOUND MONSTERS WITHOUT THE AID OF MANY COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC MACHINES!
AND, IN ALL OF WAKANDA TERRITORY, THERE IS BUT ONE PLACE WHERE SUCH EQUIPMENT COULD BE HIDDEN--!
IT IS THERE, I KNOW, THAT I SHALL FIND THE ONE I MUST DESTROY!
14


SOFTLY, SILENTLY, THE BLACK PANTHER DROPS TO THE GROUND, A FEW MINUTES LATER--LANDING WITH THE GRACE AND EASE OF A TRUE FELINE--!
THIS PORTION OF MY BELOVED JUNGLE--LAID WASTE BY THE POWER OF KLAW, AND HIS DEADLY CREATIONS!
BUT, FROM THIS MOMENT ON --HE WILL DESTROY NO MORE!
THIS HIDDEN CAVE--THE LARGEST IN WAKANDA--HE COULD SAFELY CONCEAL ANYTHING WITHIN ITS DEPTHS!
EVEN IN THE SHADOWS--EVEN IN THE GLOOM--HE IS UNMISTAKABLE! I HAVE FOUND MY QUARRY!
FIRST, I'LL DISPOSE OF THESE TWO UNSUSPECTING GUARDS!
AND THEN, THE REAL CHALLENGE WILL COME--WHEN I'M FACE-TO-FACE WITH KLAW, AT LONG LAST!
I WAS RIGHT! IT IS HIM!
AND THAT MUST BE HIS MASTER CONVERSION SYSTEM FOR CHANGING BASIC SOUND INTO LIVING MATTER!
AT LAST I'M READY TO LAUNCH MY MAIN ATTACK!
FOR YOU, KLAW, THERE SHALL BE NO MORE ATTACKS! FOR YOU--THERE IS ONLY RETRIBUTION!
THAT VOICE!! I LAST HEARD ONE LIKE IT TEN YEARS AGO--BUT I CAN NEVER FORGET IT!
THE BLACK PANTHER! THE ONE WHOSE NAME IS MUTTERED IN WHISPERS THRUOUT AFRICA! I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST A LEGEND--A MYTH!! BUT--YOU DO EXIST!
I EXIST! I HAVE EXISTED, WAITED, PLANNED, ALL THIS TIME--UNTIL THIS DAY WHEN MY FATHER'S DEATH SHALL BE AVENGED!
NEVER! IT IS YOU WHO SHALL PERISH! FOR I AM STRONGER NOW THAN BEFORE!
AND, THANKS TO YOU, I CARRY A DEADLY WEAPON IN PLACE OF A RIGHT HAND!
15

HAH! YOU BACK AWAY! YOU CAN SENSE THE POWER SEETHING WITHIN THE METAL FORCE GLOVE I HAVE CREATED FOR MYSELF!
A GLOVE WHICH CAN NEVER LOSE ITS ENERGY, FOR IT IS ACTIVATED BY THE SLIGHTEST SOUND!
USE IT THEN!! NO MATTER HOW SKILLFUL YOU ARE, THE BLACK PANTHER CAN DODGE ITS IMPACT!
TIME ENOUGH TO RAM THOSE WORDS DOWN YOUR THROAT LATER!
NOW, SINCE YOU THINK YOUR PANTHER POWER CAN SAVE YOU, I'LL PROVE HOW WRONG YOU ARE!
BEFORE YOU CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, I'LL GIVE YOU A LITTLE DEMONSTRATION OF HOW FAST, AND HOW DEADLY MY SOUND CONVERTER CAN BE--!
CLICK!
ONLY KLAW CAN INSTANTANEOUSLY CHANGE THE BASIC ENERGY OF SOUND--AND TRANSFORM IT INTO A SIMULATION OF ANY LIVING CREATURE--
AND, WHAT CAN BE MORE IRONIC--MORE JUST--THAN HAVING YOU MEET YOUR FATE BENEATH THE TALONS OF ANOTHER BLACK PANTHER--A FAR SUPERIOR ONE!
RRR
THUS, DOES THE MASTER OF SOUND EXACT HIS FINAL REVENGE!
BUT, JUST IN CASE THE PRECEDING SEQUENCE WAS TOO NERVE-WRACKING IN ITS SHEER, STARK INTENSITY, WE'LL EXERCISE OUR EDITORIAL PEROGATIVE BY BRIEFLY SWITCHING SCENES ONCE MORE, AS WE REJOIN THE GIGANTIC RED ELEPHANT WHICH IS CHARGING MURDEROUSLY TOWARDS THE INDOMITABLE THING--
YOU DON'T SCARE ME, DUMBO! IF YER FEELIN' HUNGRY--HERE'S A KING-SIZED PEANUT TO CHEW ON!
CRASH!
16


BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE MOUNTAINOUS BOULDER STRIKE THE CHARGING BEAST, THAN IT CRUMBLES INTO A THOUSAND SMALLER FRAGMENTS, RICOCHETTING BACK AT THE DUMBFOUNDED HUMAN POWERHOUSE--!
WHOOM!
IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT REALLY BUGS ME, IT'S A WISE-GUY ELEPHANT!
IT'S THE ONES LIKE YOU THAT MAKE A JOKE OUTTA "BE KIND TO DUMB ANIMALS WEEK"!
BUT, I GOT NEWS FOR YA, 'BIG BOY! YA MADE ONE REAL BAD MISTAKE--
JUST BECAUSE I GOT A SWEET, INNERCENT, BLUE-EYED FACE, YA THOUGHT BASHFUL BENJAMIN WOULD BE A PUSHOVER--!
BUT, NOW I'M GONNA--
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?? THIS IS CRAZY!! IT-IT DON'T MAKE SENSE--!
THE MORE PRESSURE I PUT ON 'IM, THE MORE IT HURTS ME--JUST LIKE HE'S REFLECTIN' IT ALL BACK-- LIKE A MIRROR!
GOTTA LET UP ON 'IM! MY OWN STRENGTH ALMOST FINISHED ME OFF--!
HE'S STARTIN' TO FADE AWAY-- LIKE SOME KINDA GHOST!! BUT HE WUZ REAL-- I KNOW HE WUZ--!
WYATT! THE ELEPHANT'S GONE! SEE IF BEN NEEDS ANY HELP--WHILE I LOWER SUE AND JOHNNY TO THE GROUND!
HE SEEMS ALL RIGHT, MR. RICHARDS! HE'S STARTING TO GET UP!
'COURSE I'M AWRIGHT! I WUZ JUST TRYIN' TO FIND ME A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER!
17


LEGGO MY PAW, KID! I CAN GIT UP BY MY LONE-SOME!
I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED ANYBODY COULD BATTLE A GIANT ELEPHANT TO A STANDSTILL!
THEY CAN'T! BUT I AIN'T ANYBODY!
I MUST'A BEEN UNCONSCIOUS! WHAT HAPPENED TO BIG BEN?
HE'S ALL RIGHT, JOHNNY! HE TRIED TO TACKLE THAT CRIMSON ELEPHANT SINGLE-HANDED, EVEN THOUGH I WARNED HIM IT WAS HOPELESS!
YOU SEE, BEN--THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS THAT RAW STRENGTH ALONE JUST WON'T SOLVE!
WELL, IF YA EXPECT TO GIT RID'A THEM LIVIN' ANIMAL CRACKERS BY RECITIN' POETRY AT 'EM, COUNT ME OUT!
REED, DARLING-- WHAT CAN WE DO? IT ALL SEEMS SO HOPELESS!
THE BLACK PANTHER! HE'S THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEY TO ALL THIS! BUT--WHERE IS HE? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
REED RICHARDS MAY NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MYSTERIOUS WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN, BUT WE DO--DON'T WE--?
PRRRRR
IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! HE'S OUT-FIGHTING MY OWN GIANT PANTHER!
HIS SPEED--HIS STRENGTH--HE'S LIKE A HUMAN PANTHER HIMSELF!
ENOUGH! I SEE NOW THAT I MAY TOY WITH YOU NO LONGER! IT IS TIME FOR MY SUPREME WEAPON TO BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY!
HE MERELY PUSHED A LEVER-- AND THE BEAST IS VANISHING-- AS THOUGH HE HAS NEVER EXISTED!
IT WAS NO ILLUSION, SON OF T'CHAKA! I HAVE MERELY RECONVERTED HIM --BACK TO BASIC SOUND!
AND NOW, USING MY SOUND-POWERED FORCE GLOVE, I'LL CHANGE THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF YOUR BODY!
THEN, WITH THE BLACK PANTHER GONE, I'LL SEIZE THE TREASURE OF THE WAKANDAS! THE SACRED MOUND OF VIBRANIUM WILL BE MINE-- AT LAST!
NEVER--WHILE A TRIBESMAN LIVES!
THEN THEY MUST DIE--STARTING WITH YOU--!
18

BUT, BEFORE THE MAD MASTER OF SOUND CAN ACTIVATE HIS STRANGE WEAPON, THE BLACK PANTHER, MOVING AS SWIFTLY AS HIS NAMESAKE, HURLS THE FATAL POWER SWITCH WHICH HIS NIMBLE FINGERS HAD BEEN SILENTLY GROPING FOR--!
MY CONVERTER! IT-IT'S BEING BLOWN APART!!
IT HAS TO END THIS WAY-- IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE!
YOU DID NOT REALIZE-- I AM A SCIENTIST, TOO--!
THUS, I COULD TELL WHICH LEVER TO THROW IN ORDER TO OVERLOAD YOUR DELICATE ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS!
AND NOW, ONLY MY PANTHER SPEED CAN SAVE ME FROM THE HOLOCAUST WHICH IS ABOUT TO BEFALL--!
IT'S OVER! THE CAVE IS DESTROYED! NEVERMORE SHALL THE MASTER OF SOUND'S UNCANNY MONSTERS THREATEN MY LAND!
MAY YOUR ETERNAL SLEEP BE A PEACEFUL ONE, T'CHAKA MY FATHER!! THIS DAY YOU HAVE BEEN AVENGED!
AT THAT MOMENT, THOUSANDS OF YARDS AWAY, FIVE PAIR OF STARTLED EYES SEE THE ELECTRIFYING UPHEAVAL--
THAT ENTIRE HILL--IT'S BEEN SHATTERED INTO NOTHING-NESS!
WHAT IS IT, REED? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
I'M NOT SURE, JOHNNY--BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT THE BLACK PANTHER IS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE!
THE SOUND IS DEAFENING!! IT'S LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD! HOLD ME, MY DARLING--!
HEY! LOOK--OVER THERE! A COUPLE MORE OF THEM REFUGEES FROM GOD-ZILLA!
BUT--THEY'RE FADING AWAY!! THEY MUST SOMEHOW BE LINKED TO THE EXPLOSION!
WHATEVER IT WAS THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED, MUST HAVE BEEN THE THING THAT CREATED THEM!
19

IT WAS KLAW WHO CREATED THEM--KLAW, WHO, IN HIS MADNESS, LEARNED THE INCREDIBLE SECRET OF TRANSFORMING SOUND INTO MASS!
BUT, I DESTROYED HIS ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT! IT WOULD TAKE HIM A LIFETIME TO REPLACE IT--IF HE SURVIVED!
SO THAT'S WHY THEM NUTTY ANIMALS FADED AWAY!
THEN YOUR MISSION IS ENDED!
YES--THE MASTER OF SOUND HAS BEEN DEFEATED!
BUT, SOMEHOW, I CANNOT BELIEVE IT IS OVER! I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THE BLACK PANTHER WILL STALK NO MORE!
DON'T GIT ALL SHOOK UP, PAL! MEBBE THE YANCY STREET GANG CAN USE YA!
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM! THAT WASN'T FUNNY!
WELL, YA CAN'T WIN EM ALL!
THERE'S NO REASON FOR THE BLACK PANTHER'S CAREER TO COME TO AN END! THE WORLD WILL ALWAYS HAVE NEED OF A DEDICATED, POWERFUL FIGHTER AGAINST INJUSTICE!
REED'S RIGHT, FELLA! THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING TODAY, YOU NEVER HEAR OF A SUPER-HERO BEING OUT OF WORK!
I SHALL DO IT! I PLEDGE MY FORTUNE, MY POWERS--MY VERY LIFE--TO THE SERVICE OF ALL MANKIND!
ANYWAY, WITH A COSTUME LIKE THAT, YA CAN ALWAYS BECOME A RASSLER, OR A NEW KINDA FOLK SINGER!
BUT, EVEN AS THE GALLANT BLACK PANTHER DEDICATES HIMSELF TO AIDING HUMANITY; AMIDST THE CARNAGE AND RUBBLE OF THE SHATTERED HILLOCK, ANOTHER TYPE OF DEDICATION IS ABOUT TO BE MADE--
MY LIFE'S WORK--SHATTERED--RUINED--ALL BECAUSE OF T'CHAKA'S SON AGAIN!
BUT, BY SOME STRANGE QUIRK OF FATE--THE MASTER OF SOUND STILL LIVES!
AND, MY CONVERTER STILL POSSESSES A GLIMMER OF ENERGY--PERHAPS ENOUGH FOR ONE FINAL TRANS-FORMATION!!
THERE IS ONE EXPERIMENT I NEVER DARED TO MAKE--ONE CHALLENGE I NEVER DARED ACCEPT!
I NEVER LEARNED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF--A HUMAN ALTERED HIS OWN BASIC STRUCTURE VIA MY SOUND TRANSFORMER!!
20
IF I SURVIVE, I'LL EMERGE WITH POWERS FAR DIFFERENT THAN THOSE EVER POSSESSED BY MORTAL MAN--!
POWERS ENOUGH TO ENABLE ME TO DESTROY THE ACCURSED BLACK PANTHER--
--AND, AFTER HIM--ANY-ONE ELSE I SO CHOOSE!
IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT WE SHALL MEET THE BLACK PANTHER AND HIS ARCH-FOE, KLAW, ONCE AGAIN--BUT, TILL WE DO, DON'T MISS THE START OF A BRAND-NEW STORY LINE NEXT ISH! YOU KNOW HOW IT UPSETS US WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN AT THE BEGINNING!

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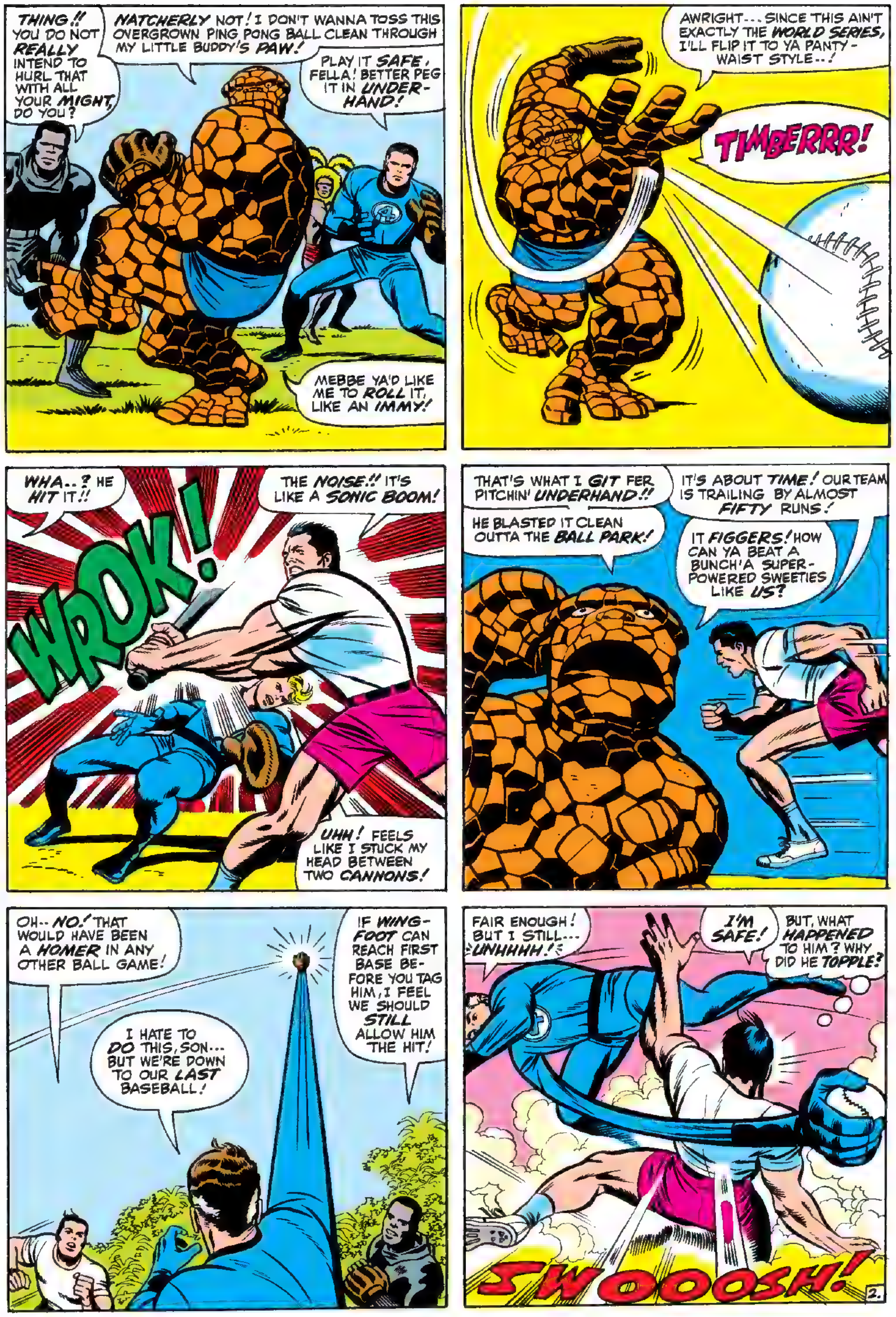
FEATURING: A FLAMING, FLYING, FIGHTING-MAD HUMAN TORCH!

THE FABULOUS F.F. GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS!
"WHOSOEVER FINDS THE EVIL EYE..!"
SURE YOU'VE SEEN BASEBALL GAMES BEFORE! BUT, WE THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS ONE JUST A LITTLE BIT... DIFFERENT!
HEADS UP, KIDDIES! MY KNUCKLE-DUSTER PITCH CAN MAKE A BULLET LOOK LIKE IT'S STANDIN' STILL!
TAKE IT EASY, BEN! EVEN THAT TITANIUM BAT... WHICH THE BLACK PANTHER GAVE US... MIGHT BUCKLE UNDER IF YOU REALLY BEAR DOWN!
JUST PUT IT OVER THE PLATE, MR. GRIMM!
THIS WILL NEVER REPLACE LION-HUNTING, MY FRIENDS!
YOU'RE WAY AHEAD OF 'IM, BENJY BOY!
CAREFUL, JOHNNY! NO MITT IS PADDED ENOUGH TO HANDLE BEN'S FAST BALL!
POOR WYATT! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S IN FOR IF BEN REALLY LET'S GO!
BY THEIR LUSTER SHALL YE KNOW THEM!
SCRIPT: SMILIN' STAN LEE
ART: JOLLY JACK KIRBY
INKING: JOVIAL JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING: SNARLIN' SAM ROSEN

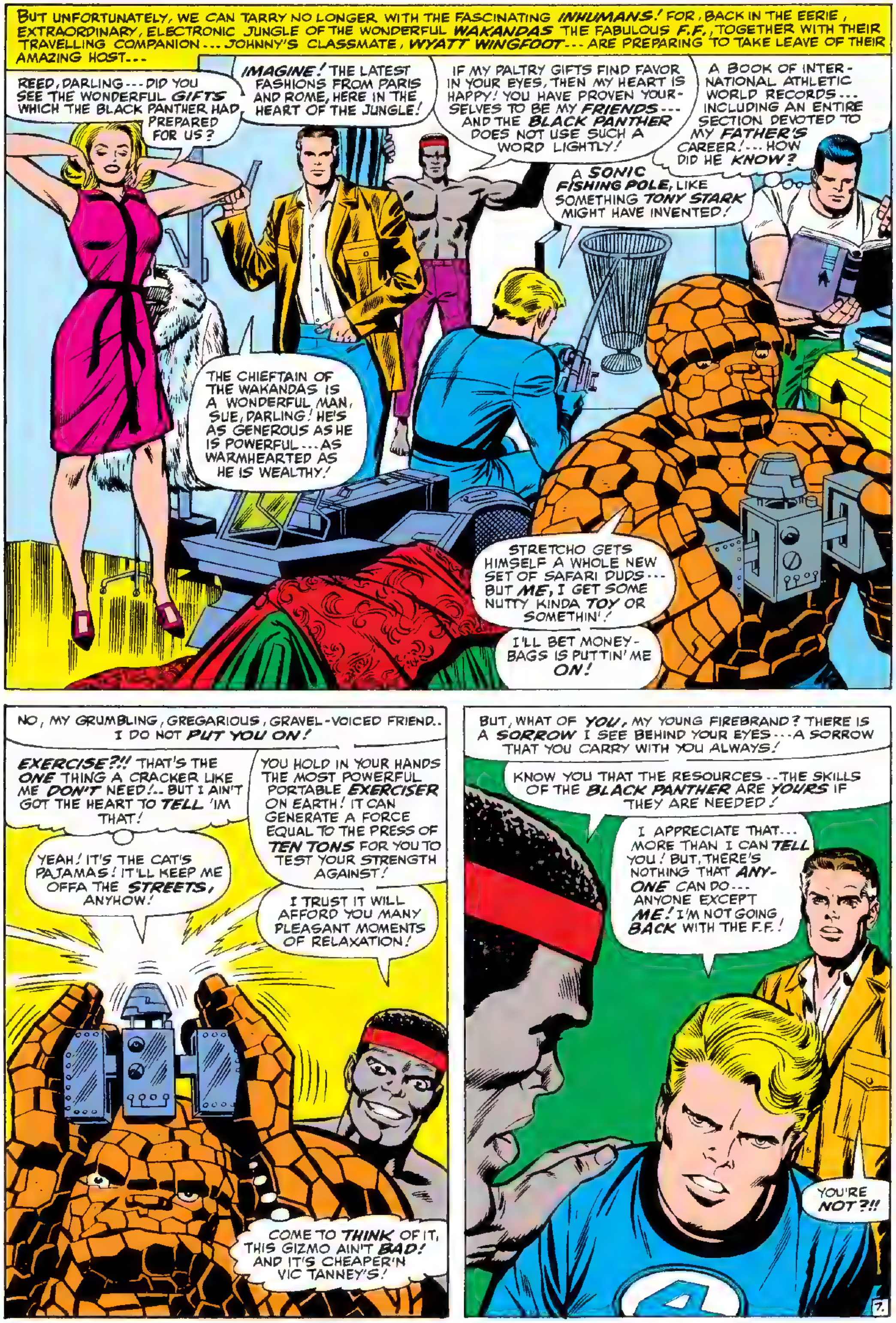

THING!! YOU DO NOT REALLY INTEND TO HURL THAT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT, DO YOU?
NATCHERLY NOT! I DON'T WANNA TOSS THIS OVERGROWN PING PONG BALL CLEAN THROUGH MY LITTLE BUDDY'S PAW!
PLAY IT SAFE, FELLA! BETTER PEG IT IN UNDER-HAND!
MEBBE YA'D LIKE ME TO ROLL IT, LIKE AN IMMY!
AWRIGHT--- SINCE THIS AIN'T EXACTLY THE WORLD SERIES, I'LL FLIP IT TO YA PANTY-WAIST STYLE--!
TIMBERRR!
WHA..? HE HIT IT!!
THE NOISE!! IT'S LIKE A SONIC BOOM!
WROK!
UHH! FEELS LIKE I STUCK MY HEAD BETWEEN TWO CANNONS!
THAT'S WHAT I GIT FER PITCHIN' UNDERHAND!!
HE BLASTED IT CLEAN OUTTA THE BALL PARK!
IT'S ABOUT TIME! OUR TEAM IS TRAILING BY ALMOST FIFTY RUNS!
IT FIGGERS! HOW CAN YA BEAT A BUNCH'A SUPER-POWERED SWEETIES LIKE US?
OH-- NO! THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A HOMER IN ANY OTHER BALL GAME!
IF WING-FOOT CAN REACH FIRST BASE BE-FORE YOU TAG HIM, I FEEL WE SHOULD STILL ALLOW HIM THE HIT!
I HATE TO DO THIS, SON--- BUT WE'RE DOWN TO OUR LAST BASEBALL!
FAIR ENOUGH! BUT I STILL--- UNHHHH!
I'M SAFE!
BUT, WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? WHY DID HE TOPPLE?
SWOOOSH!
2.

RATS! I KNEW SOMETHIN' WOULD SPOIL MY NO-HITTER!
YOU'RE FASTER THAN I THOUGHT, WYATT! I DIDN'T EVEN SEE YOU BUMPING INTO ME!
BUT I DIDN'T, MR. RICHARDS! I NEVER TOUCHED YOU!
HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH, MY FRIEND! YOU MUST HAVE STUMBLED!
ANYONE WHO KNOWS MR. FANTASTIC LIKE I KNOW HIM HAS TO ADMIT THAT HE NEVER STUMBLES!
I WONDER WHAT DID TRIP HIM UP?
MEBBE YER JUST BUSHED, STRETCHO! AFTER ALL, YOU AIN'T GETTIN' ANY YOUNGER, PAL!
YA WANT I SHOULD BRING YA SOME WARM MILK AN' A COOKIE!
AT EASE, BEN! I'M NOT READY TO BE PUT OUT TO PASTURE YET!
BESIDES, I'VE SUDDENLY FOUND THE ANSWER I WAS LOOKING FOR..!
I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
IT'S THE INVISIBLE GIRL... MATERIALIZING!
SUSAN S. RICHARDS! MY OWN LITTLE BRIDE!
I'M SORRY, DARLING... BUT YOU WERE UNFAIR TO POOR WYATT!
WELL, YOUNG LADY... PERHAPS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TEACH YOU WHERE A YOUNG WIFE'S LOYALTY SHOULD BE!
YOU'LL HAVE TO CATCH ME FIRST! AND I'LL BET YOU CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT STRETCHING YOUR ARMS OUT LIKE YOU DID TO CATCH THAT BALL!
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, PRETTY GIRL!
WELL, THERE GOES THE BLASTED BALL GAME! WHEN HE FINALLY CATCHES 'ER, THEY'LL PROBABLY GO OFF 'N SHMOOZE SOME-WHERE!
WHAT A REVOLTIN' DEVELOP-MENT!
NEVER HAVE I ENJOYED THE COMPANY OF ANY SO MUCH AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR! YOU HAVE FILLED MY LAND WITH CHEER AND THE SPIRIT OF FELLOWSHIP!
AND NOW, IN MY OWN SMALL WAY, I SHALL TRY TO SHOW MY GRATITUDE..!
3.

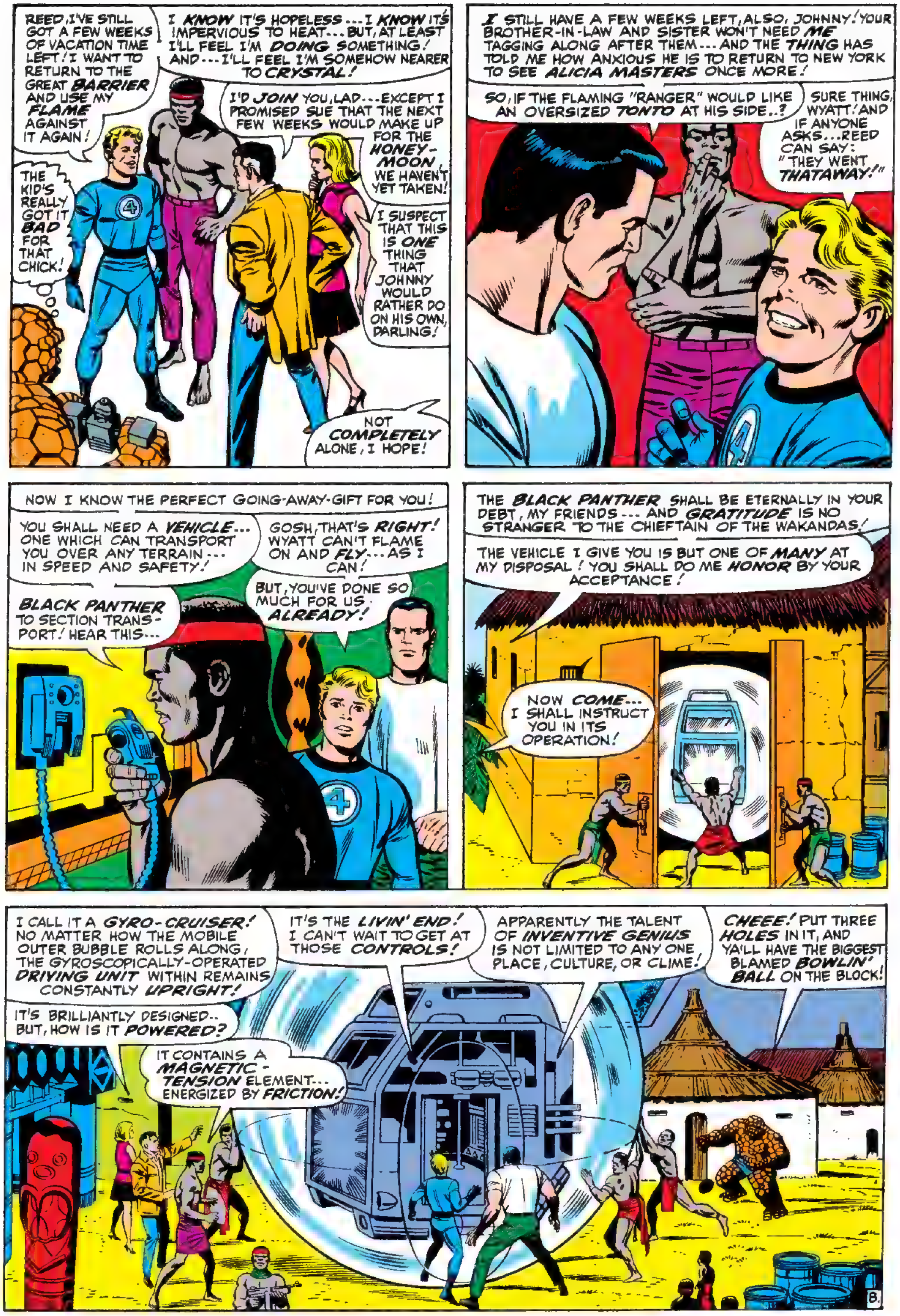
HOURS LATER, AT DINNER TIME, HE WHO IS CALLED THE BLACK PANTHER... WHO IS THIS HEREDITARY CHIEFTAIN OF THE MIGHTY WAKANDAS... HE WHOSE WEALTH IS VIRTUALLY BEYOND CALCULATION... INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S MOST RENOWNED PIANIST, WHOM HE HAS FLOWN TO HIS PALACE FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF ENTERTAINING HIS COLORFUL GUESTS..!
MY NEXT SELECTION WILL BE GRIEG'S PIANO CONCERTO IN A MINOR... OPUS 16!
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A SCENE LIKE THIS CAN BE TAKING PLACE IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE!
WHERE THE BLACK PANTHER IS CONCERNED, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!
WILL YOU NOT HAVE SOME RARE DELICACIES?
NO, THANKS! NOT NOW!
JOHNNY'S BEEN BROODING FOR HOURS! I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?
THAT'S A HECKUVA BEAT TA FRUG TO!
M'WABU! MORE NECTAR FOR OUR HONORED GUESTS!
4.

BUT, ONE GUEST THERE IS WHO DOES NOT EVEN HEAR THE MAGNIFICENT MELODIES... FOR HIS THOUGHTS CONSTANTLY RETURN TO A SAD-EYED GIRL... A GIRL HE CAN NEVER FORGET...
THE NIGHTS ARE THE HARDEST! I KEEP HEARING HER VOICE IN MY BRAIN... WHISPERING... PLEADING... CALLING TO ME..!
JOHNNY! WHERE ARE YOU? I'LL NEVER STOP WAITING FOR YOU -- MY JOHNNY!
...A GIRL, UNLIKE ANY OTHER GIRL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH! AND, IN A LAND WHERE FEW HAVE EVER TROD, SHE IS IMPRISONED BEHIND A BARRIER WHICH NO MAN CAN SHATTER --- THE BARRIER BENEATH WHICH THE INHUMANS DWELL!
WE SHALL NEVER STOP TRYING TO FIND A MEANS OF SMASHING THIS ACCURSED BARRIER!
EVEN NOW, BLACK BOLT RETURNS... FROM HIS DAILY MISSION OF GLIDING AROUND THE CITY, SEEKING ANY POSSIBLE WEAK SPOT IN THE ETERNAL DOME!
'TIS ALL THE DOING OF MAXIMUS, THE NOW-MAD BROTHER OF BLACK BOLT!
'TWAS HE WHO CREATED THE BARRIER-- AND ONLY HE KNOWS THE SECRET OF ITS DESTRUCTION!
BUT, THE LOOK ON HIS FACE IS ENOUGH TO TELL US HE HAS FAILED ONCE MORE! NO WEAK SPOT EXISTS! WE SHALL NEVER ESCAPE!
BUT, THE SECRET IS FOREVER LOCKED WITHIN HIS MADDENED BRAIN!
YET, ALTHOUGH THEY KNOW FULL WELL THAT THEIR CAUSE IS VIRTUALLY HOPELESS, THE AWESOME INHUMANS DESPERATELY REACH OUT FOR ANY FAINT RAY OF HOPE -- OF ENCOURAGEMENT...
BLACK BOLT... DID YOU FIND ANYTHING AT ALL? EVEN THE SLIGHTEST WEAK SPOT IN THE BARRIER?
OR, HAVE YOU FOUND THE SECRET WHICH ONLY YOUR BROTHER KNOWS? AFTER ALL... YOUR BRAIN IS AS KEEN AS HIS!
THOUGH YOU ARE DENIED THE POWER OF SPEECH, YOUR MEANING IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR! WE ARE STILL DOOMED TO LIVE OUT OUR LIVES BENEATH THIS ACCURSED DOME!
OH, GORGON... IF I CANNOT SEE JOHNNY STORM AGAIN, THEN NOTHING ELSE MATTERS! IT IS AS THOUGH MY LIFE HAS ALREADY COME TO AN END!
DO NOT DESPAIR, MY CHILD! WE SHALL YET FIND A WAY!

LET US FOLLOW BLACK BOLT! HE GOES TO VISIT MAXIMUS ONCE MORE!
BUT, SINCE BLACK BOLT DEFEATED MAXIMUS... AND REGAINED THE THRONE WHICH WAS USURPED FROM HIM... HIS BROTHER HAS BECOME A BABBLING MADMAN!
FOR HE KNOWS FULL WELL... AS DO WE ALL... THAT ONLY THE EVIL MAXIMUS KNOWS HOW TO REVERSE THE NEGATIVE CHARGE OF HIS DREADED ATMOS GUN... AND NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH CAN SHATTER THE BARRIER!
TRUE, CRYSTAL! BUT BLACK BOLT IS STILL THE POWER! TRUST HIM, MY CHILD!
OPENING MAXIMUS' CELL DOOR WITH DEXTROUS FINGERS STRONG AS FORGED STEEL BANDS, BLACK BOLT SEES THE FEMALE WHOM HE LOVES... THE LONG-HAIRED, MYSTERIOUS MEDUSA... TRYING TO CAJOLE THE FATEFUL SECRET FROM THE CACKLING CREATURE WHO CROUCHES IN THE CORNER ---
WE WILL NOT HARM YOU, MAXIMUS! YOU MUST TELL US HOW TO REVERSE THE NEGATIVE ZONE SO THAT... OH!
HE EITHER CANNOT.. OR WILL NOT UNDERSTAND!
BLACK BOLT! I'VE BEEN HERE FOR HOURS, BUT IT SEEMS HOPELESS!
AHH! I AM GLAD YOU HAVE COME! NOW, I CAN SHOW YOU WHAT I HAVE BUILT! YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HOW CLEVER MAXIMUS IS!
HE SPEAKS WITH THE TONE OF AN INCOHERENT CHILD! HE LIVES IN A FANTASY WORLD OF HIS OWN MAKING!
SHOW US, MAXIMUS! WHAT HAVE YOU CREATED?
SEE? IT IS A METAL KITE! BUT IT FLIES WITHOUT WINGS--- WITHOUT A MOTOR!
I MERELY ADAPTED IT TO A POLARIZED ANTI-GRAVITY CAPSULE! SEE HOW IT FLIES!
I FORGIVE YOU, BLACK BOLT! I FORGIVE YOU FOR TAKING MY CROWN AWAY FROM ME! AFTER ALL, ARE YOU NOT MY OWN BROTHER?
IF YOU LIKE, I WILL MAKE A METAL KITE FOR YOU! OR, I WILL MAKE YOU SOME OTHER CLEVER PLAYTHING!
OH, I FORGOT! YOU CANNOT ANSWER! YOU CANNOT SPEAK!
I SHALL SPEAK FOR BLACK BOLT! I KNOW WHAT HE WOULD LIKE BEST OF ALL! CAN YOU MAKE SOMETHING THAT CAN SHATTER ANY BARRIER? I DON'T THINK YOU ARE ABLE TO!
WILL MAXIMUS DO IT? WILL HE TRY TO PROVE HE CAN MAKE IT? OR... IS HE TOO MAD? IS IT IMPOSSIBLE? EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!
6.



BUT UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN TARRY NO LONGER WITH THE FASCINATING INHUMANS! FOR, BACK IN THE EERIE, EXTRAORDINARY, ELECTRONIC JUNGLE OF THE WONDERFUL WAKANDAS THE FABULOUS F.F., TOGETHER WITH THEIR TRAVELLING COMPANION--- JOHNNY'S CLASSMATE, WYATT WINGFOOT--- ARE PREPARING TO TAKE LEAVE OF THEIR AMAZING HOST---
REED, DARLING--- DID YOU SEE THE WONDERFUL GIFTS WHICH THE BLACK PANTHER HAD PREPARED FOR US?
IMAGINE! THE LATEST FASHIONS FROM PARIS AND ROME, HERE IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE!
IF MY PALTRY GIFTS FIND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES, THEN MY HEART IS HAPPY! YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELVES TO BE MY FRIENDS--- AND THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT USE SUCH A WORD LIGHTLY!
A BOOK OF INTERNATIONAL ATHLETIC WORLD RECORDS--- INCLUDING AN ENTIRE SECTION DEVOTED TO MY FATHER'S CAREER!--- HOW DID HE KNOW?
A SONIC FISHING POLE, LIKE SOMETHING TONY STARK MIGHT HAVE INVENTED!
THE CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS IS A WONDERFUL MAN, SUE, DARLING! HE'S AS GENEROUS AS HE IS POWERFUL--- AS WARMHEARTED AS HE IS WEALTHY!
STRETCHO GETS HIMSELF A WHOLE NEW SET OF SAFARI DUDS--- BUT ME, I GET SOME NUTTY KINDA TOY OR SOMETHIN'!
I'LL BET MONEYBAGS IS PUTTIN' ME ON!
NO, MY GRUMBLING, GREGARIOUS, GRAVEL-VOICED FRIEND.. I DO NOT PUT YOU ON!
YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS THE MOST POWERFUL PORTABLE EXERCISER ON EARTH! IT CAN GENERATE A FORCE EQUAL TO THE PRESS OF TEN TONS FOR YOU TO TEST YOUR STRENGTH AGAINST!
EXERCISE?!! THAT'S THE ONE THING A CRACKER LIKE ME DON'T NEED!.. BUT I AIN'T GOT THE HEART TO TELL 'IM THAT!
YEAH! IT'S THE CAT'S PAJAMAS! IT'LL KEEP ME OFFA THE STREETS, ANYHOW!
I TRUST IT WILL AFFORD YOU MANY PLEASANT MOMENTS OF RELAXATION!
COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS GIZMO AIN'T BAD! AND IT'S CHEAPER'N VIC TANNEY'S!
BUT, WHAT OF YOU, MY YOUNG FIREBRAND? THERE IS A SORROW I SEE BEHIND YOUR EYES--- A SORROW THAT YOU CARRY WITH YOU ALWAYS!
KNOW YOU THAT THE RESOURCES--THE SKILLS OF THE BLACK PANTHER ARE YOURS IF THEY ARE NEEDED!
I APPRECIATE THAT--- MORE THAN I CAN TELL YOU! BUT, THERE'S NOTHING THAT ANYONE CAN DO--- ANYONE EXCEPT ME! I'M NOT GOING BACK WITH THE F.F.!
YOU'RE NOT?!!
7



Johnny and Wyatt continue on their adventure, and then, in *The Fantastic Four* #56, Klaw returns looking for vengeance…

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
56 NOV
"KLAW The MURDEROUS MASTER of SOUND!"

THE FABULOUS F.F. ARE TRAPPED BY THE UNCANNY RETURN OF
KLAW THE MURDEROUS MASTER OF SOUND!
PRODUCED BY: STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY
DELINEATED BY: JOE SINNOT
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
'NUFF SAID!
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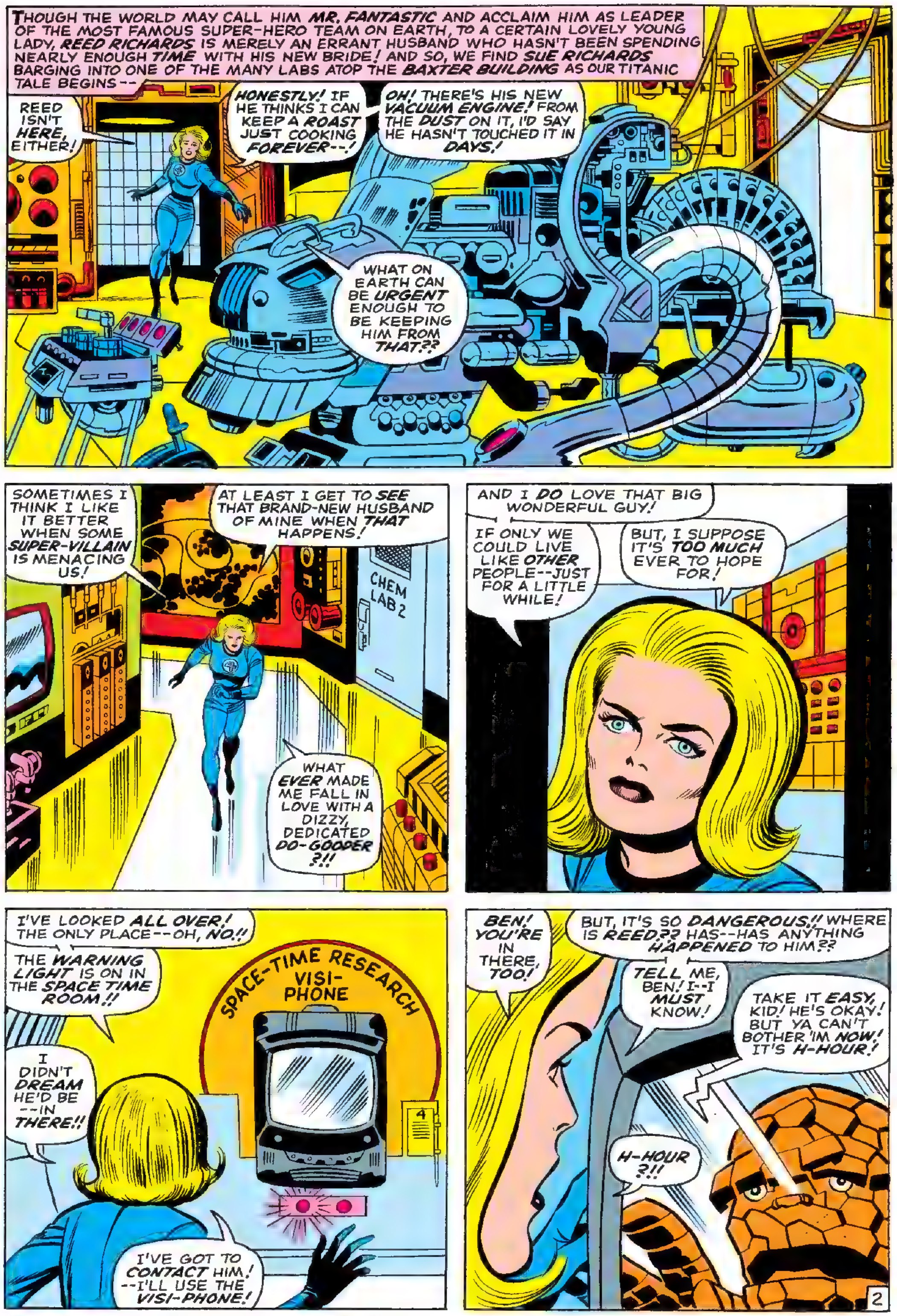
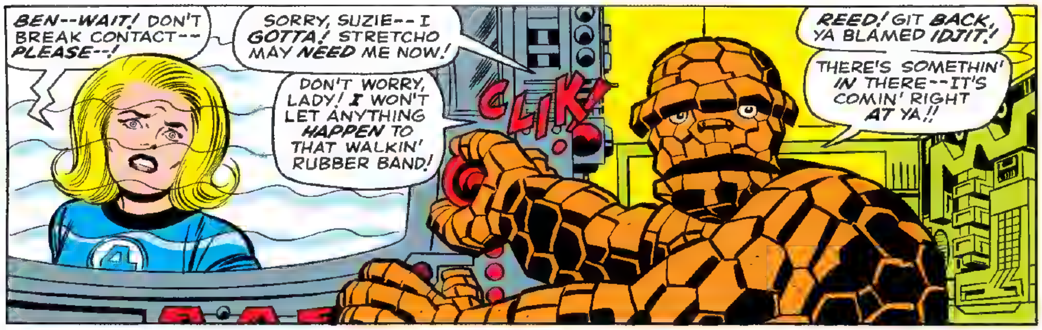
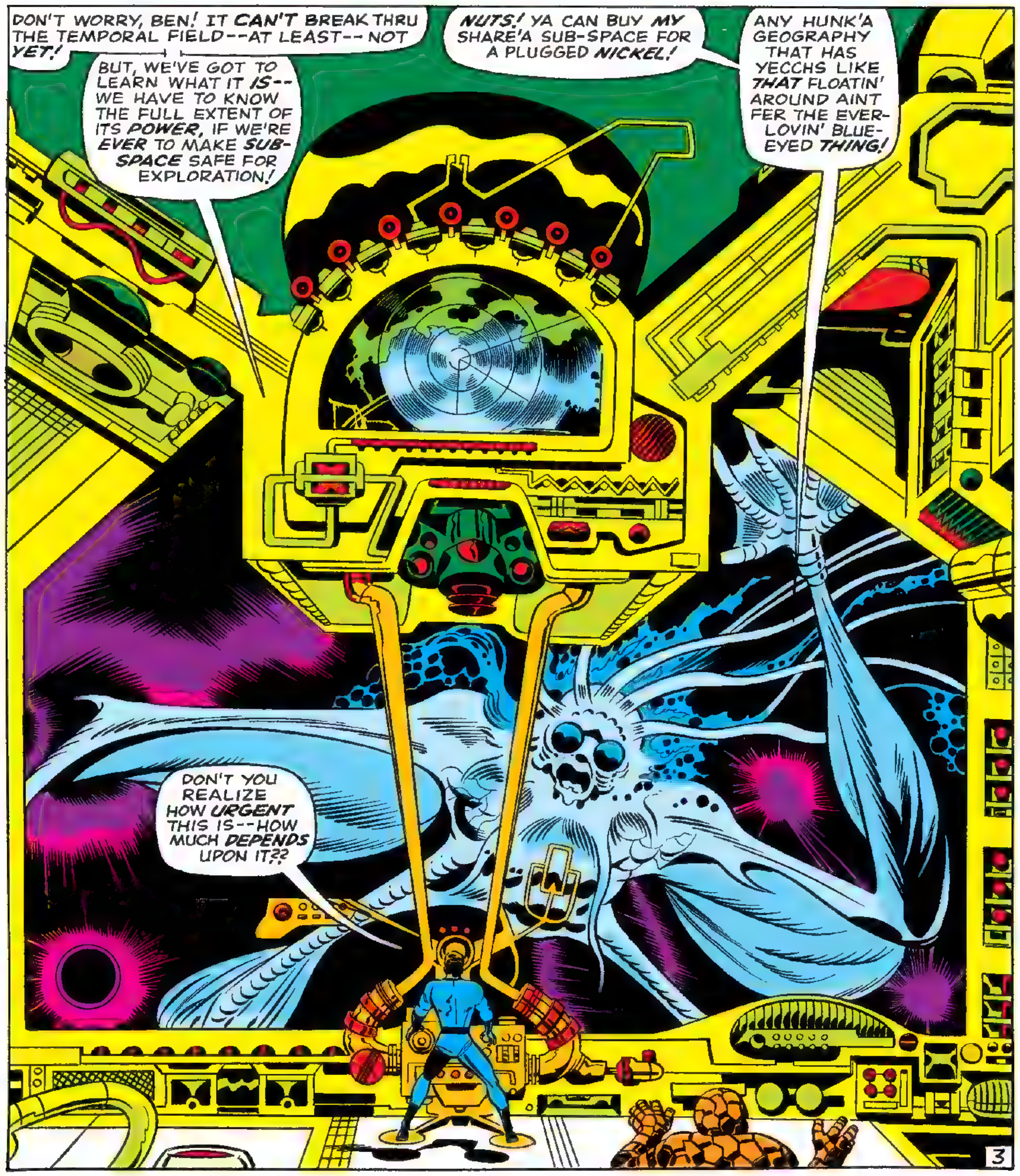


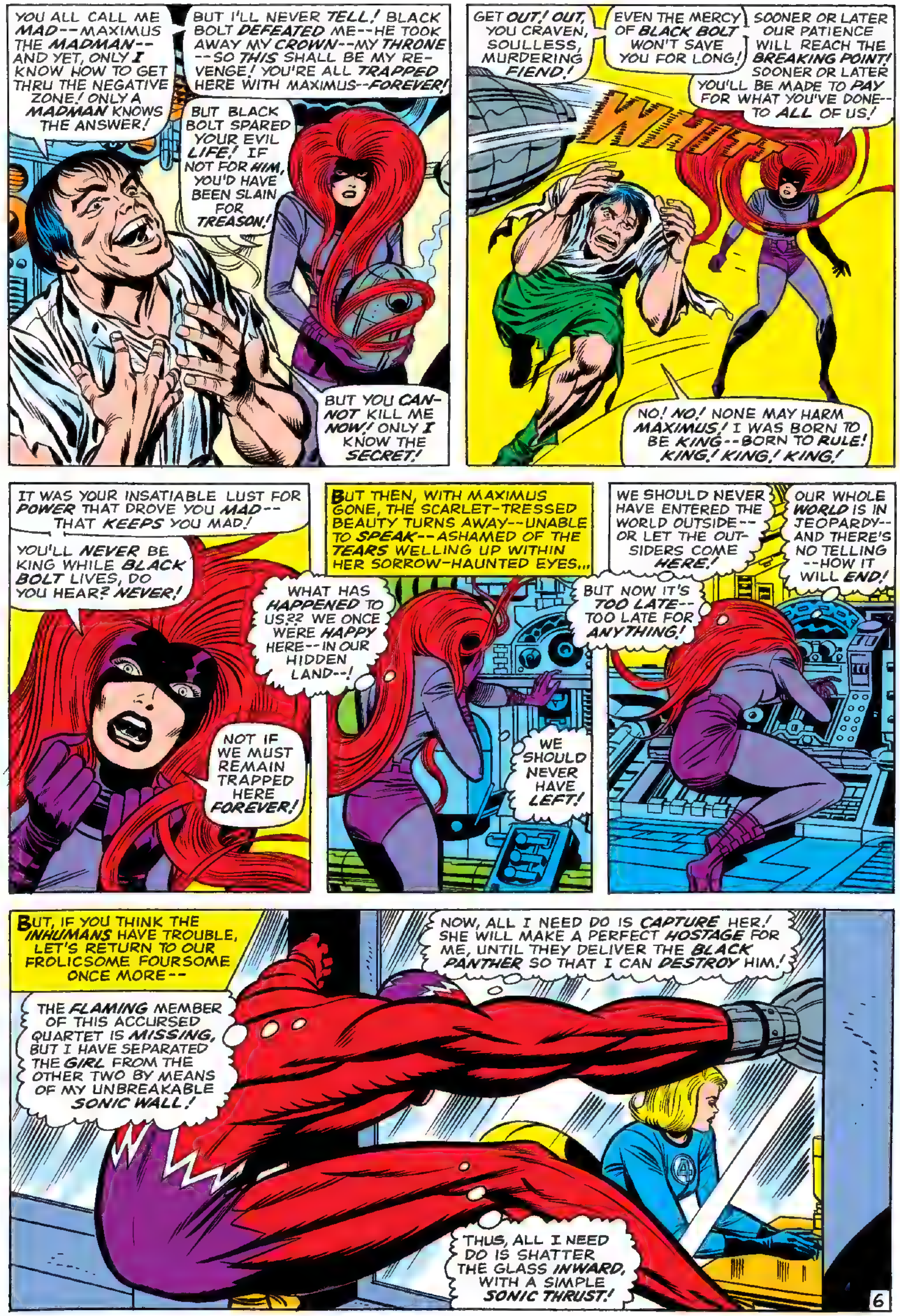
THOUGH THE WORLD MAY CALL HIM MR. FANTASTIC AND ACCLAIM HIM AS LEADER OF THE MOST FAMOUS SUPER-HERO TEAM ON EARTH, TO A CERTAIN LOVELY YOUNG LADY, REED RICHARDS IS MERELY AN ERRANT HUSBAND WHO HASN'T BEEN SPENDING NEARLY ENOUGH TIME WITH HIS NEW BRIDE! AND SO, WE FIND SUE RICHARDS BARGING INTO ONE OF THE MANY LABS ATOP THE BAXTER BUILDING AS OUR TITANIC TALE BEGINS--
REED ISN'T HERE, EITHER!
HONESTLY! IF HE THINKS I CAN KEEP A ROAST JUST COOKING FOREVER--!
OH! THERE'S HIS NEW VACUUM ENGINE! FROM THE DUST ON IT, I'D SAY HE HASN'T TOUCHED IT IN DAYS!
WHAT ON EARTH CAN BE URGENT ENOUGH TO BE KEEPING HIM FROM THAT??
SOMETIMES I THINK I LIKE IT BETTER WHEN SOME SUPER-VILLAIN IS MENACING US!
AT LEAST I GET TO SEE THAT BRAND-NEW HUSBAND OF MINE WHEN THAT HAPPENS!
CHEM LAB 2
WHAT EVER MADE ME FALL IN LOVE WITH A DIZZY, DEDICATED DO-GOODER ?!!
AND I DO LOVE THAT BIG WONDERFUL GUY!
IF ONLY WE COULD LIVE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE--JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE!
BUT, I SUPPOSE IT'S TOO MUCH EVER TO HOPE FOR!
I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER! THE ONLY PLACE--OH, NO!!
THE WARNING LIGHT IS ON IN THE SPACE TIME ROOM!!
SPACE-TIME RESEARCH
VISI-PHONE
I DIDN'T DREAM HE'D BE --IN THERE!!
4
I'VE GOT TO CONTACT HIM! --I'LL USE THE VISI-PHONE!
BEN! YOU'RE IN THERE, TOO!
BUT, IT'S SO DANGEROUS!! WHERE IS REED?? HAS--HAS ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM??
TELL ME, BEN! I--I MUST KNOW!
TAKE IT EASY, KID! HE'S OKAY! BUT YA CAN'T BOTHER 'IM NOW! IT'S H-HOUR!
H-HOUR ?!!

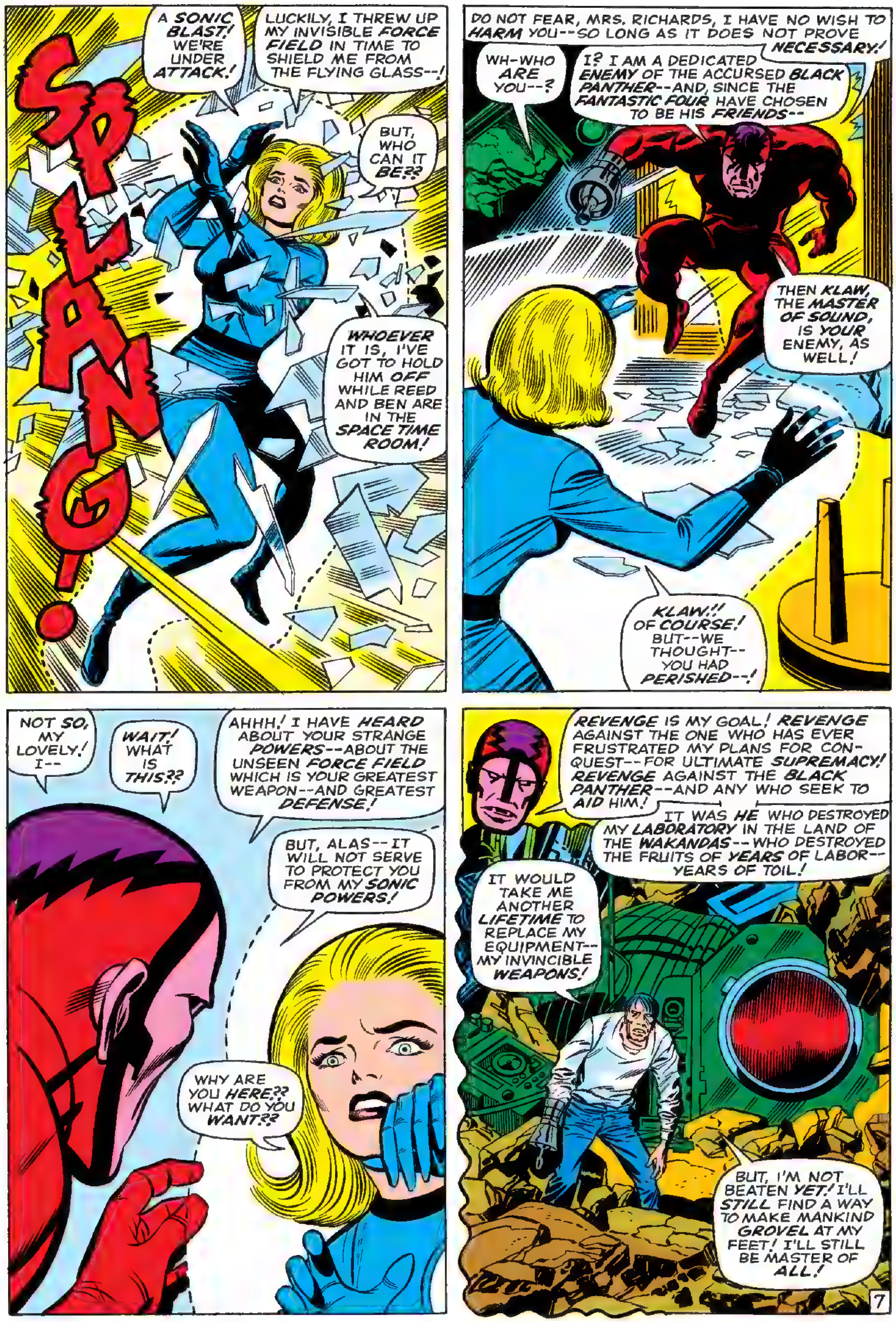

BEN--WAIT! DON'T BREAK CONTACT-- PLEASE--!
SORRY, SUZIE-- I GOTTA! STRETCHO MAY NEED ME NOW!
DON'T WORRY, LADY! I WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO THAT WALKIN' RUBBER BAND!
CLIK!
REED! GIT BACK, YA BLAMED IDJIT!
THERE'S SOMETHIN' IN THERE--IT'S COMIN' RIGHT AT YA!!


DON'T WORRY, BEN! IT CAN'T BREAK THRU THE TEMPORAL FIELD--AT LEAST-- NOT YET!
BUT, WE'VE GOT TO LEARN WHAT IT IS-- WE HAVE TO KNOW THE FULL EXTENT OF ITS POWER, IF WE'RE EVER TO MAKE SUB-SPACE SAFE FOR EXPLORATION!
NUTS! YA CAN BUY MY SHARE'A SUB-SPACE FOR A PLUGGED NICKEL!
ANY HUNK'A GEOGRAPHY THAT HAS YECCHS LIKE THAT FLOATIN' AROUND AINT FER THE EVER-LOVIN' BLUE-EYED THING!
DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW URGENT THIS IS--HOW MUCH DEPENDS UPON IT??

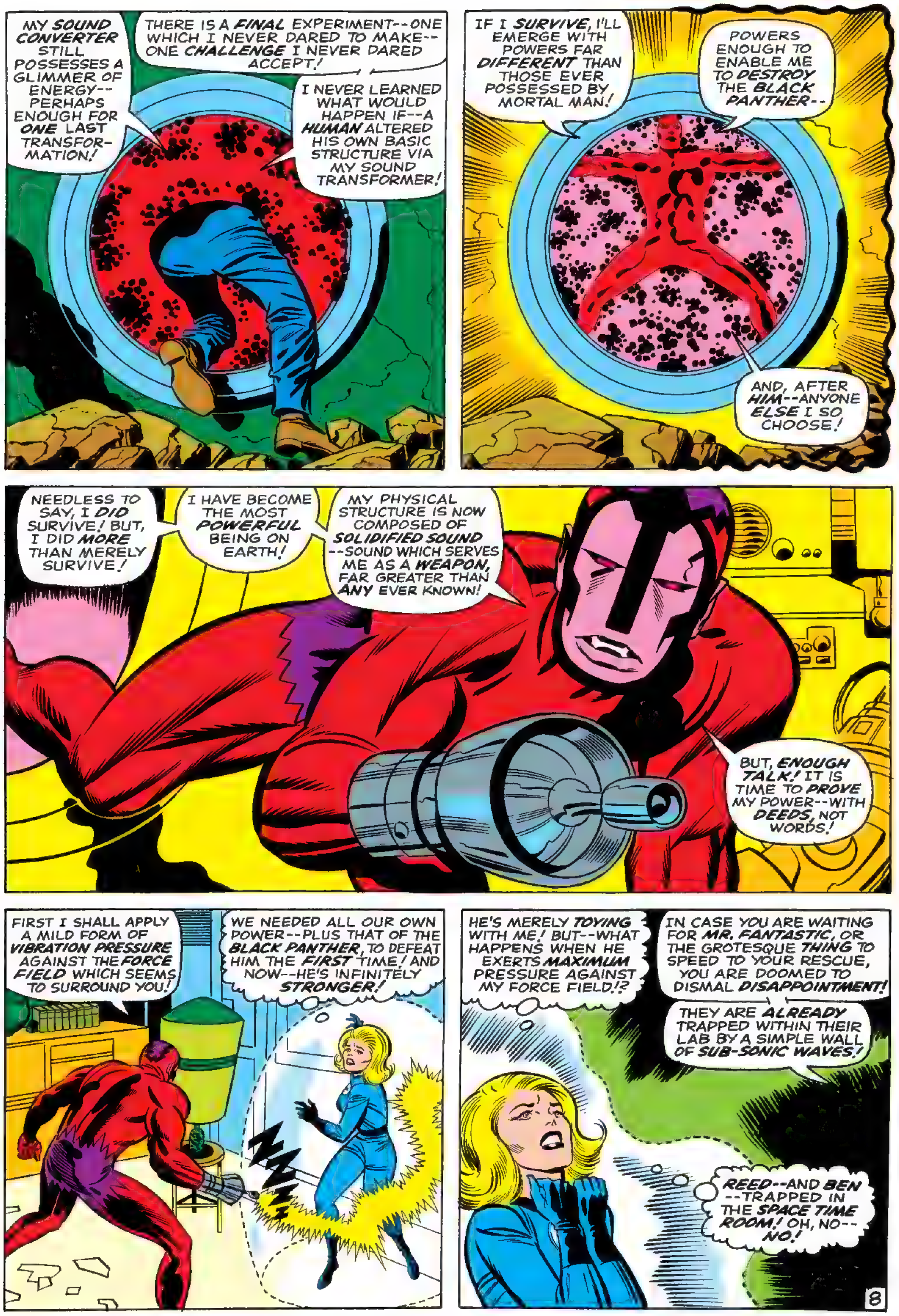
SUB-SPACE IS A VAST, UNKNOWN UNIVERSE--CONTAINING THE ANSWER TO A MILLION AGE-OLD QUESTIONS!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE INHUMANS, BEN--TRAPPED BEHIND THAT UNBREAKABLE NEGATIVE ZONE?
YEAH? GIMME A FER-INSTANCE!
CRYSTAL IS STILL IN THERE--AND POOR JOHNNY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME TILL HE'S FOUND HER AGAIN!
I WANT TO HELP HIM, BEN! I YET MAY FIND AN ENTRANCE--THRU SUB-SPACE ITSELF!
AND ALL THIS TIME THE KID THINKS YA FORGOT ALL ABOUT 'IM! HE'S OUT TRYIN' TO FIND 'ER HIMSELF!
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN! IT'S ALWAYS ON MY MIND--JUST AS I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU, OLD FRIEND!
I'LL NEVER REST TILL I'VE FOUND THE FORMULA FOR CHANGING YOU BACK TO YOUR NORMAL SELF AGAIN--PERMANENTLY!
I'M ALL SHOOK UP, STRETCHO!
BUT, JUST BETWEEN US--I'M BEGINNIN' TO FEEL LIKE THIS IS MY NORMAL LOVEABLE SELF!
HEY! NOW WHAT ARE YA DOIN'??!
I'M TRYING TO GET THAT APPARITION ON FILM--FOR FUTURE ANALYSIS! QUICK--RECORD ANY SOUNDS IT MAKES!
IT'S A BLASTED HAM! LISTEN TO THE RACKET IT'S MAKIN' NOW!
NO, BEN! THAT'S NOT THE CREATURE FROM SUB-SPACE! IT'S SOME SORT OF SONIC BOOM--!
EEEOOOO
WATCH OUT FOR THE SHOCK WAVE!!
NOW HE TELLS ME!
AND, ON THE ROOF OF THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS, A MERCILESS, HUMORLESS CHUCKLE RINGS OUT--
THEY'RE TRAPPED! I'VE SEALED THEM INSIDE THEIR LABORATORY WITH AN UNBREAKABLE WALL OF SOLIDIFIED SUB-SONIC WAVES!
ZZIT!
THEY NEVER EXPECTED TO BE MENACED BY KLAW, THE MASTER OF SOUND, AGAIN! THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD DESTROYED ME IN THE HEART OF AFRICA!*
BUT, I EMERGED FROM MY SOUND CONVERTER FAR STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE--THIRSTING FOR REVENGE!
THE BLACK PANTHER MIGHT NOW BE ANYWHERE ON EARTH! AND, IF HE IS WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR, BELOW, THEN THEY WILL ALL PERISH--TOGETHER!
*F.F. #53--SPECIFIC STAN.
4

CONFUSING ENOUGH FOR YOU, FAITHFUL ONE? WELL, HOLD TIGHT--WE'VE ONLY BEGUN!!
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, BEHIND THE AWESOME BARRIER WHICH IMPRISONS THE TERATOLOGICAL INHUMANS, WE HEAR--
BLACK BOLT!! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO BLACK BOLT??!
HE SCREAMED!! FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE LOST HIS VOICE --HE SCREAMED!! BUT--WHY??
IT'S CLEAR TO ME NOW! HE USED HIS GREAT POWERS TO DRIVE THE ABSORBA-BOMB AGAINST THE BARRIER, HOPING TO SHATTER IT AT LAST!*
BUT, HE SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT WE WOULD BE DESTROYED ALONG WITH THE BARRIER, DUE TO THE ENERGY HE HAD BUILT UP!
ONLY THAT ONE, LIFE-SAVING SCREAM COULD HAVE DE-FUSED THE BOMB IN TIME!
IF BLACK BOLT HAD DIED, THEN LIFE WOULD HAVE HELD NO MEANING FOR MEDUSA!
HE SAVED US ALL--BUT, AT WHAT COST TO HIMSELF?
THAT MEANS WE STILL ARE TRAPPED--NO CLOSER TO FREEDOM THAN BEFORE!
*LUCKY IT HAPPENED AS RECENTLY AS ISH #54, SO WE STILL KINDA REMEMBER IT! --SLEEPLESS STAN.
THAT ACCURSED BOMB!! IT ALMOST CAUSED THE DEATH OF THE GREATEST, MOST WONDERFUL MAN IN ALL THE WORLD!
I'D RATHER BE TRAPPED HERE FOREVER THAN HAVE BLACK BOLT SACRIFICE HIS LIFE TO SET US FREE!
WHITT!
SUDDENLY, THE INSANE CACKLING OF MAXIMUS, THE MAD BROTHER OF BLACK BOLT, CUTS THRU THE AIR LIKE THE SOUND OF A KNIFE BLADE SCRAPING ALONG A BLACKBOARD--
A MOST NOBLE SENTIMENT, MEDUSA! A PITY YOUR BELOVED CANNOT NOW HEAR YOU!
THERE IS A WAY THRU THE BARRIER--BUT ONLY MAXIMUS KNOWS THE SECRET!
IT WAS YOU, EVIL ONE-- AND YOU ALONE, WHO CREATED THE DREADED DOME!
WE MUST NOT LET HIM TORMENT US! THE SECRET IS LOST FOREVER WITHIN THE TWISTED RECESSES OF HIS AFFLICTED BRAIN!
5

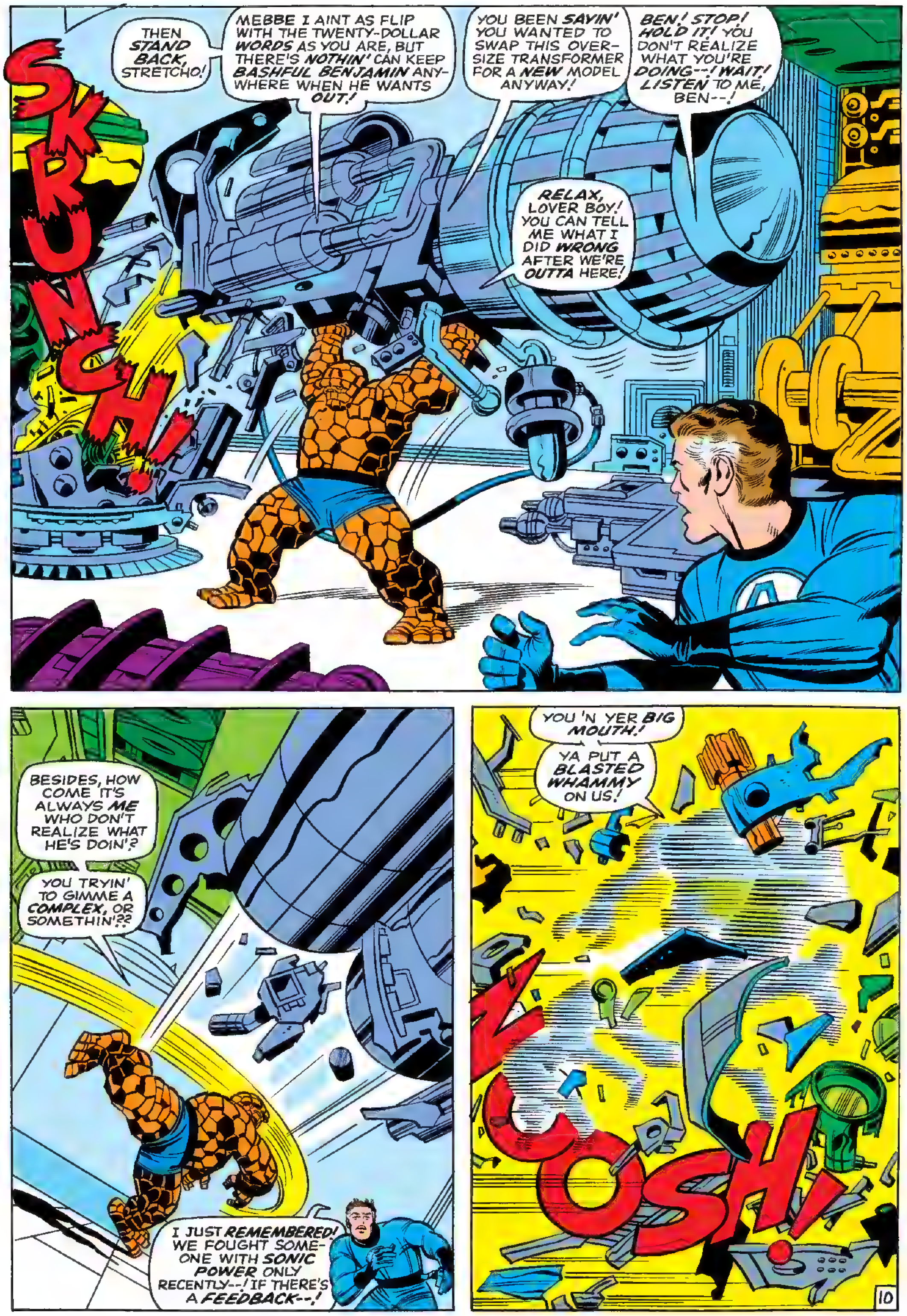

YOU ALL CALL ME MAD--MAXIMUS THE MADMAN--AND YET, ONLY I KNOW HOW TO GET THRU THE NEGATIVE ZONE! ONLY A MADMAN KNOWS THE ANSWER!
BUT I'LL NEVER TELL! BLACK BOLT DEFEATED ME--HE TOOK AWAY MY CROWN--MY THRONE--SO THIS SHALL BE MY REVENGE! YOU'RE ALL TRAPPED HERE WITH MAXIMUS--FOREVER!
BUT BLACK BOLT SPARED YOUR EVIL LIFE! IF NOT FOR HIM, YOU'D HAVE BEEN SLAIN FOR TREASON!
BUT YOU CANNOT KILL ME NOW! ONLY I KNOW THE SECRET!
GET OUT! OUT, YOU CRAVEN, SOULLESS, MURDERING FIEND!
EVEN THE MERCY OF BLACK BOLT WON'T SAVE YOU FOR LONG!
SOONER OR LATER OUR PATIENCE WILL REACH THE BREAKING POINT! SOONER OR LATER YOU'LL BE MADE TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE--TO ALL OF US!
WHIT
NO! NO! NONE MAY HARM MAXIMUS! I WAS BORN TO BE KING--BORN TO RULE! KING! KING! KING!
IT WAS YOUR INSATIABLE LUST FOR POWER THAT DROVE YOU MAD--THAT KEEPS YOU MAD!
YOU'LL NEVER BE KING WHILE BLACK BOLT LIVES, DO YOU HEAR? NEVER!
NOT IF WE MUST REMAIN TRAPPED HERE FOREVER!
BUT THEN, WITH MAXIMUS GONE, THE SCARLET-TRESSED BEAUTY TURNS AWAY--UNABLE TO SPEAK--ASHAMED OF THE TEARS WELLING UP WITHIN HER SORROW-HAUNTED EYES...
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO US?? WE ONCE WERE HAPPY HERE--IN OUR HIDDEN LAND--!
WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT!
WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE ENTERED THE WORLD OUTSIDE--OR LET THE OUTSIDERS COME HERE!
OUR WHOLE WORLD IS IN JEOPARDY--AND THERE'S NO TELLING--HOW IT WILL END!
BUT NOW IT'S TOO LATE--TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING!
BUT, IF YOU THINK THE INHUMANS HAVE TROUBLE, LET'S RETURN TO OUR FROLICSOME FOURSOME ONCE MORE--
NOW, ALL I NEED DO IS CAPTURE HER! SHE WILL MAKE A PERFECT HOSTAGE FOR ME, UNTIL THEY DELIVER THE BLACK PANTHER SO THAT I CAN DESTROY HIM!
THE FLAMING MEMBER OF THIS ACCURSED QUARTET IS MISSING, BUT I HAVE SEPARATED THE GIRL FROM THE OTHER TWO BY MEANS OF MY UNBREAKABLE SONIC WALL!
THUS, ALL I NEED DO IS SHATTER THE GLASS INWARD, WITH A SIMPLE SONIC THRUST!
4
6

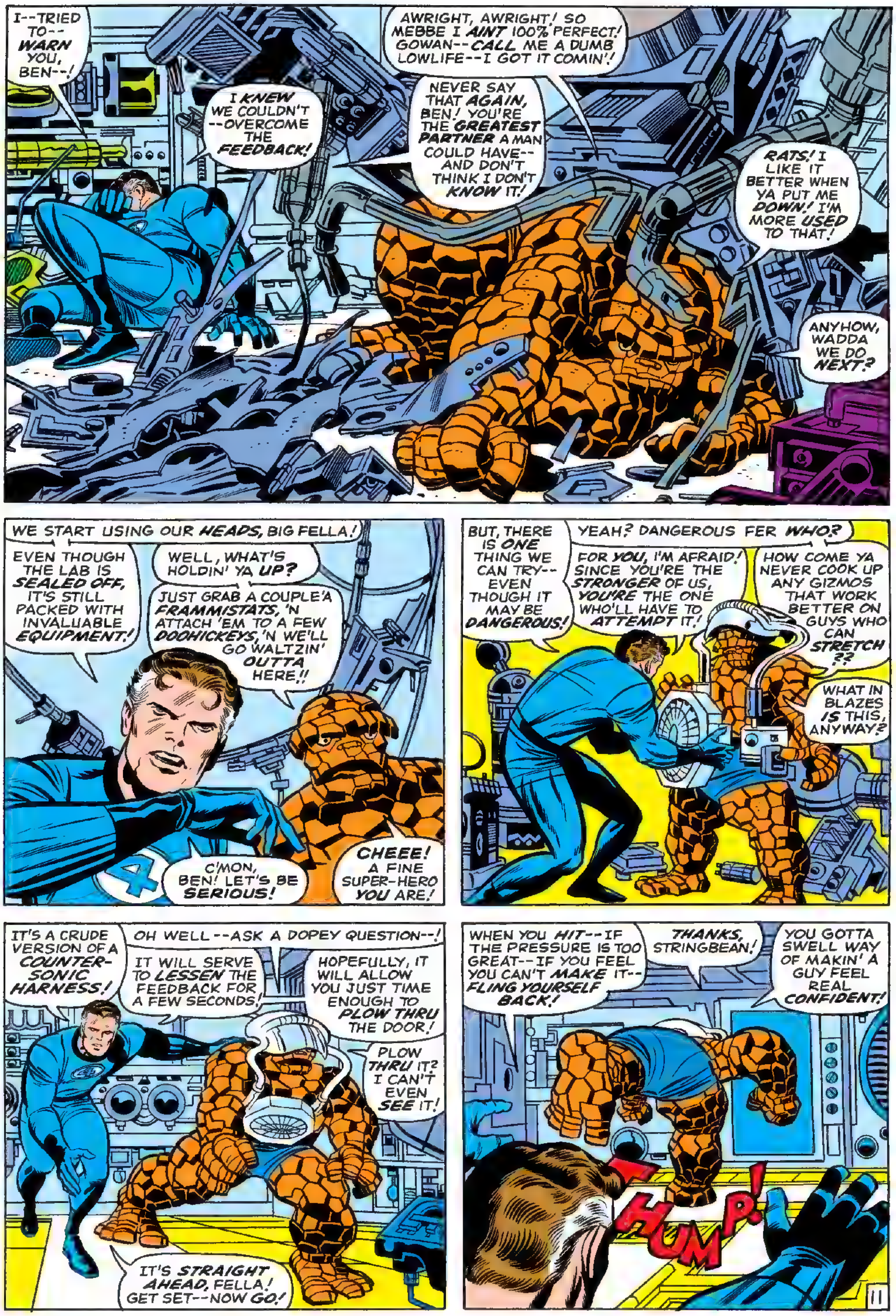


SPLANG!
A SONIC BLAST! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
LUCKILY, I THREW UP MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD IN TIME TO SHIELD ME FROM THE FLYING GLASS--!
BUT, WHO CAN IT BE??
WHOEVER IT IS, I'VE GOT TO HOLD HIM OFF WHILE REED AND BEN ARE IN THE SPACE TIME ROOM!
DO NOT FEAR, MRS. RICHARDS, I HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU--SO LONG AS IT DOES NOT PROVE NECESSARY!
WH-WHO ARE YOU--?
I? I AM A DEDICATED ENEMY OF THE ACCURSED BLACK PANTHER--AND, SINCE THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE CHOSEN TO BE HIS FRIENDS--
THEN KLAW, THE MASTER OF SOUND, IS YOUR ENEMY, AS WELL!
KLAW!! OF COURSE! BUT--WE THOUGHT--YOU HAD PERISHED--!
NOT SO, MY LOVELY! I--
WAIT! WHAT IS THIS??
AHHH! I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOUR STRANGE POWERS--ABOUT THE UNSEEN FORCE FIELD WHICH IS YOUR GREATEST WEAPON--AND GREATEST DEFENSE!
BUT, ALAS--IT WILL NOT SERVE TO PROTECT YOU FROM MY SONIC POWERS!
WHY ARE YOU HERE?? WHAT DO YOU WANT??
REVENGE IS MY GOAL! REVENGE AGAINST THE ONE WHO HAS EVER FRUSTRATED MY PLANS FOR CONQUEST--FOR ULTIMATE SUPREMACY! REVENGE AGAINST THE BLACK PANTHER--AND ANY WHO SEEK TO AID HIM!
IT WAS HE WHO DESTROYED MY LABORATORY IN THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS--WHO DESTROYED THE FRUITS OF YEARS OF LABOR--YEARS OF TOIL!
IT WOULD TAKE ME ANOTHER LIFETIME TO REPLACE MY EQUIPMENT--MY INVINCIBLE WEAPONS!
BUT, I'M NOT BEATEN YET! I'LL STILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE MANKIND GROVEL AT MY FEET! I'LL STILL BE MASTER OF ALL!
7

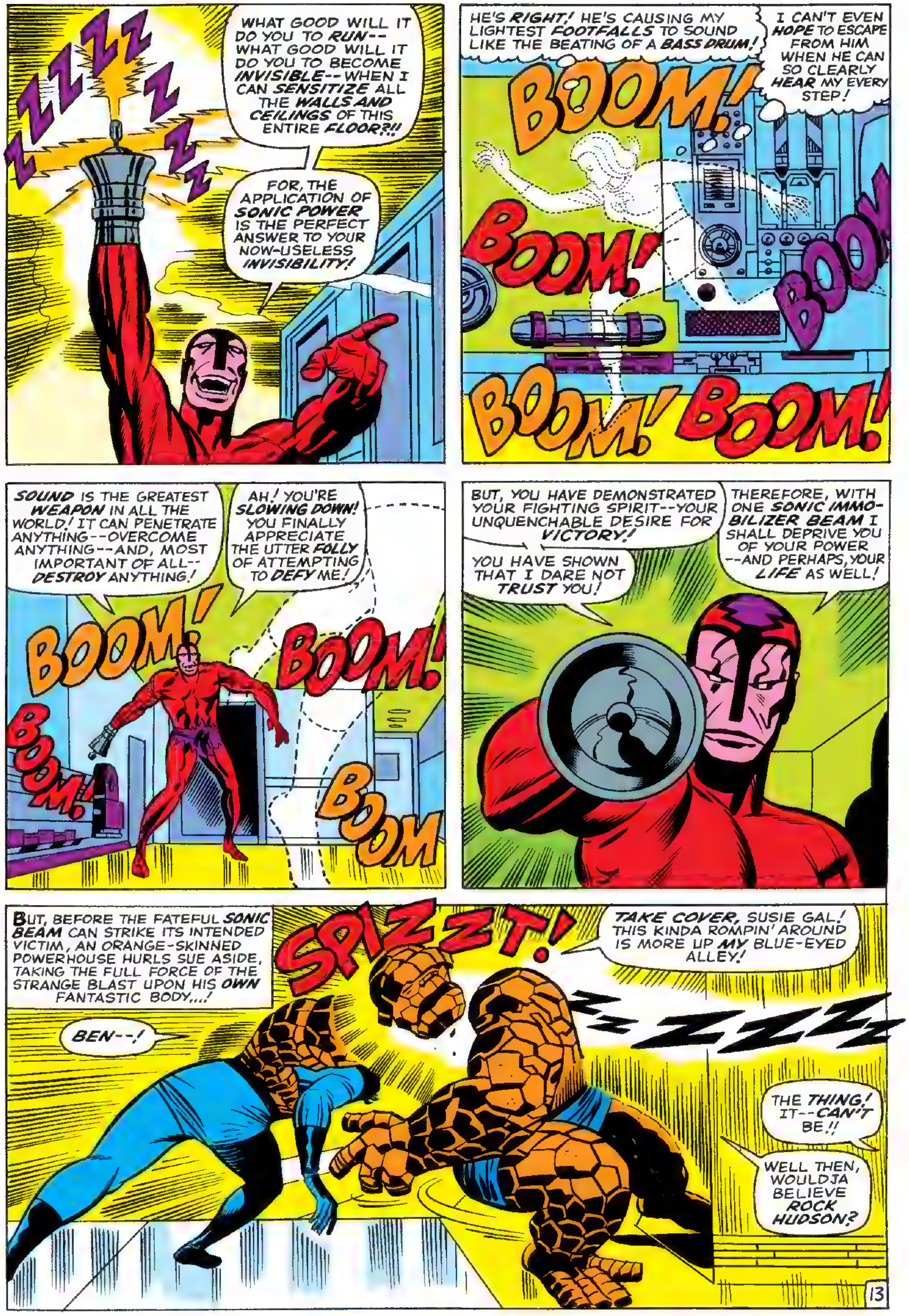

MY SOUND CONVERTER STILL POSSESSES A GLIMMER OF ENERGY--PERHAPS ENOUGH FOR ONE LAST TRANSFORMATION!
THERE IS A FINAL EXPERIMENT--ONE WHICH I NEVER DARED TO MAKE--ONE CHALLENGE I NEVER DARED ACCEPT!
I NEVER LEARNED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF--A HUMAN ALTERED HIS OWN BASIC STRUCTURE VIA MY SOUND TRANSFORMER!
IF I SURVIVE, I'LL EMERGE WITH POWERS FAR DIFFERENT THAN THOSE EVER POSSESSED BY MORTAL MAN!
POWERS ENOUGH TO ENABLE ME TO DESTROY THE BLACK PANTHER--
AND, AFTER HIM--ANYONE ELSE I SO CHOOSE!
NEEDLESS TO SAY, I DID SURVIVE! BUT, I DID MORE THAN MERELY SURVIVE!
I HAVE BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL BEING ON EARTH!
MY PHYSICAL STRUCTURE IS NOW COMPOSED OF SOLIDIFIED SOUND--SOUND WHICH SERVES ME AS A WEAPON, FAR GREATER THAN ANY EVER KNOWN!
BUT, ENOUGH TALK! IT IS TIME TO PROVE MY POWER--WITH DEEDS, NOT WORDS!
FIRST I SHALL APPLY A MILD FORM OF VIBRATION PRESSURE AGAINST THE FORCE FIELD WHICH SEEMS TO SURROUND YOU!
WE NEEDED ALL OUR OWN POWER--PLUS THAT OF THE BLACK PANTHER, TO DEFEAT HIM THE FIRST TIME! AND NOW--HE'S INFINITELY STRONGER!
HE'S MERELY TOYING WITH ME! BUT--WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE EXERTS MAXIMUM PRESSURE AGAINST MY FORCE FIELD!?
IN CASE YOU ARE WAITING FOR MR. FANTASTIC, OR THE GROTESQUE THING TO SPEED TO YOUR RESCUE, YOU ARE DOOMED TO DISMAL DISAPPOINTMENT!
THEY ARE ALREADY TRAPPED WITHIN THEIR LAB BY A SIMPLE WALL OF SUB-SONIC WAVES!
REED--AND BEN--TRAPPED IN THE SPACE TIME ROOM! OH, NO--NO!
8

IN HER DESPAIR--HER FRANTIC CONCERN FOR THE MAN SHE LOVES--AND FOR THEIR OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIEND--THE TORTURED GIRL LOSES CONTROL OF HER FORCE FIELD FOR ONE FATE-FUL SECOND--AND THEN--
COME BACK, YOU FEMALE FOOL! FLIGHT IS USELESS!
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE FROM MY SONIC VIBRATIONS!
I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO HELP REED AND BEN--SOMEHOW!
PROMISE TO SURRENDER! PROMISE TO ASSIST ME IN TRAPPING THE BLACK PANTHER, AND I'LL REMOVE THE VIBRATIONS!
GIVE ME YOUR ANSWER--QUICKLY!
NEVER! EVEN MY LIFE IS LESS DEAR TO ME THAN LOYALTY TO THOSE WHO TRUST ME!
IF I CAN JUST --FIRE THE NEURO-STUN GUN--BEFORE HE--CAN STOP ME!
I SEE THAT GUN! BUT NO WEAPON CAN HARM THE MASTER OF SOUND!
IT HAS TO STOP YOU--IT HAS TO!
IT CAN SHOCK AND IMMOBILIZE THE NERVOUS SYSTEM OF ANY LIVING HUMAN BEING!
FTOOOF!
PERHAPS IT CAN! BUT YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN ONE THING--ONE VITAL FACT--!
I AM NO LONGER A LIVING HUMAN BEING! I AM A FORM OF SONIC LIFE--WITH POWER GREATER THAN ANY YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN!
NOW DO YOU SEE? YOU CANNOT HURT A SOUND!
I CAN MAGNIFY ANY FORCE THROWN AGAINST ME--AND FEED IT BACK AT MY ATTACKER, DEADLIER THAN EVER!
ZOOOSH!
BUT, NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL A FOE MAY BE, KEEPING MR. FANTASTIC AND THE EVER LOVIN' THING AS HELPLESS PRISONERS IS NEVER QUITE AS SIMPLE AS IT MAY SEEM--
SSSSSSSS
I'VE TESTED ALL THE WALLS, BEN--AND THERE'S ONLY ONE EXPLANATION--
THE ENTIRE LAB IS COMPLETELY SEALED-IN BY SOME SORT OF VIBRATION BARRIER!
WELL, COOK UP SOME KIND'A ANTI-BARRIER GIZMO, AND LET'S GIT OUTTA HERE!
IT'S NOT THAT EASY, OLD FRIEND!
IT AIN'T??!


THEN STAND BACK, STRETCHO!
MEBBE I AINT AS FLIP WITH THE TWENTY-DOLLAR WORDS AS YOU ARE, BUT THERE'S NOTHIN' CAN KEEP BASHFUL BENJAMIN ANYWHERE WHEN HE WANTS OUT!
YOU BEEN SAYIN' YOU WANTED TO SWAP THIS OVER-SIZE TRANSFORMER FOR A NEW MODEL ANYWAY!
BEN! STOP! HOLD IT! YOU DON'T REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING--! WAIT! LISTEN TO ME, BEN--!
SKRUNCH!
RELAX, LOVER BOY! YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT I DID WRONG AFTER WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
BESIDES, HOW COME IT'S ALWAYS ME WHO DON'T REALIZE WHAT HE'S DOIN'?
YOU TRYIN' TO GIMME A COMPLEX, OR SOMETHIN'??
I JUST REMEMBERED! WE FOUGHT SOMEONE WITH SONIC POWER ONLY RECENTLY--! IF THERE'S A FEEDBACK--!
YOU 'N YER BIG MOUTH!
YA PUT A BLASTED WHAMMY ON US!
WOOSH!
10


I--TRIED TO--WARN YOU, BEN--!
I KNEW WE COULDN'T--OVERCOME THE FEEDBACK!
AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT! SO MEBBE I AINT 100% PERFECT! GOWAN--CALL ME A DUMB LOWLIFE--I GOT IT COMIN'!
NEVER SAY THAT AGAIN, BEN! YOU'RE THE GREATEST PARTNER A MAN COULD HAVE--AND DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW IT!
RATS! I LIKE IT BETTER WHEN YA PUT ME DOWN! I'M MORE USED TO THAT!
ANYHOW, WADDA WE DO NEXT?
WE START USING OUR HEADS, BIG FELLA!
EVEN THOUGH THE LAB IS SEALED OFF, IT'S STILL PACKED WITH INVALUABLE EQUIPMENT!
WELL, WHAT'S HOLDIN' YA UP?
JUST GRAB A COUPLE'A FRAMMISTATS, 'N ATTACH 'EM TO A FEW DOOHICKEYS, 'N WE'LL GO WALTZIN' OUTTA HERE!!
C'MON, BEN! LET'S BE SERIOUS!
CHEEE! A FINE SUPER-HERO YOU ARE!
BUT, THERE IS ONE THING WE CAN TRY--EVEN THOUGH IT MAY BE DANGEROUS!
YEAH? DANGEROUS FER WHO?
FOR YOU, I'M AFRAID! SINCE YOU'RE THE STRONGER OF US, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'LL HAVE TO ATTEMPT IT!
HOW COME YA NEVER COOK UP ANY GIZMOS THAT WORK BETTER ON GUYS WHO CAN STRETCH??
WHAT IN BLAZES IS THIS, ANYWAY?
IT'S A CRUDE VERSION OF A COUNTER-SONIC HARNESS!
OH WELL--ASK A DOPEY QUESTION--!
IT WILL SERVE TO LESSEN THE FEEDBACK FOR A FEW SECONDS!
HOPEFULLY, IT WILL ALLOW YOU JUST TIME ENOUGH TO PLOW THRU THE DOOR!
PLOW THRU IT? I CAN'T EVEN SEE IT!
IT'S STRAIGHT AHEAD, FELLA! GET SET--NOW GO!
WHEN YOU HIT--IF THE PRESSURE IS TOO GREAT--IF YOU FEEL YOU CAN'T MAKE IT--FLING YOURSELF BACK!
THANKS, STRINGBEAN!
YOU GOTTA SWELL WAY OF MAKIN' A GUY FEEL REAL CONFIDENT!
THUMP!
11

PA-THOOM!
KRRAK!
I MADE IT! BUT, WHAT GOOD'LL THIS DO REED?? HE'S STILL TRAPPED BACK IN THERE--SAME AS BEFORE!
SKRUNCH!
MEANWHILE, AROUND THE CORNER AND DOWN THE HALL...
NOW THAT YOU'VE WITNESSED MY INVINCIBLE POWER, YOU MUST REALIZE THE FOLLY OF FURTHER RESISTANCE!
THEREFORE I COMMAND YOU--CONTACT THE BLACK PANTHER!
WHEN HE LEARNS OF YOUR PLIGHT, HE IS CERTAIN TO RUSH TO YOUR AID--TO RUSH RIGHT INTO THE FINAL TRAP OF THE MASTER OF SOUND!
NO! I'LL NEVER HELP YOU--NEVER!
YOU FOOL! YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!
THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER CHOICE! YOU CAN'T FORCE ME TO BETRAY A FRIEND IF YOU CAN'T FIND ME! I'LL ESCAPE YOU YET!
BY TURNING INVISIBLE?? THEN, YOU STILL DON'T FULLY COMPREHEND THE AWESOME EXTENT OF MY POWER!
I'VE GOT TO REACH REED! HE'LL FIND SOME WAY TO OVERCOME KLAW!
MY MASTERY OF SOUND ENABLES ME TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING--AND I SHALL NOW DEMONSTRATE, TO PROVE HOW UNBEATABLE I TRULY AM!
12

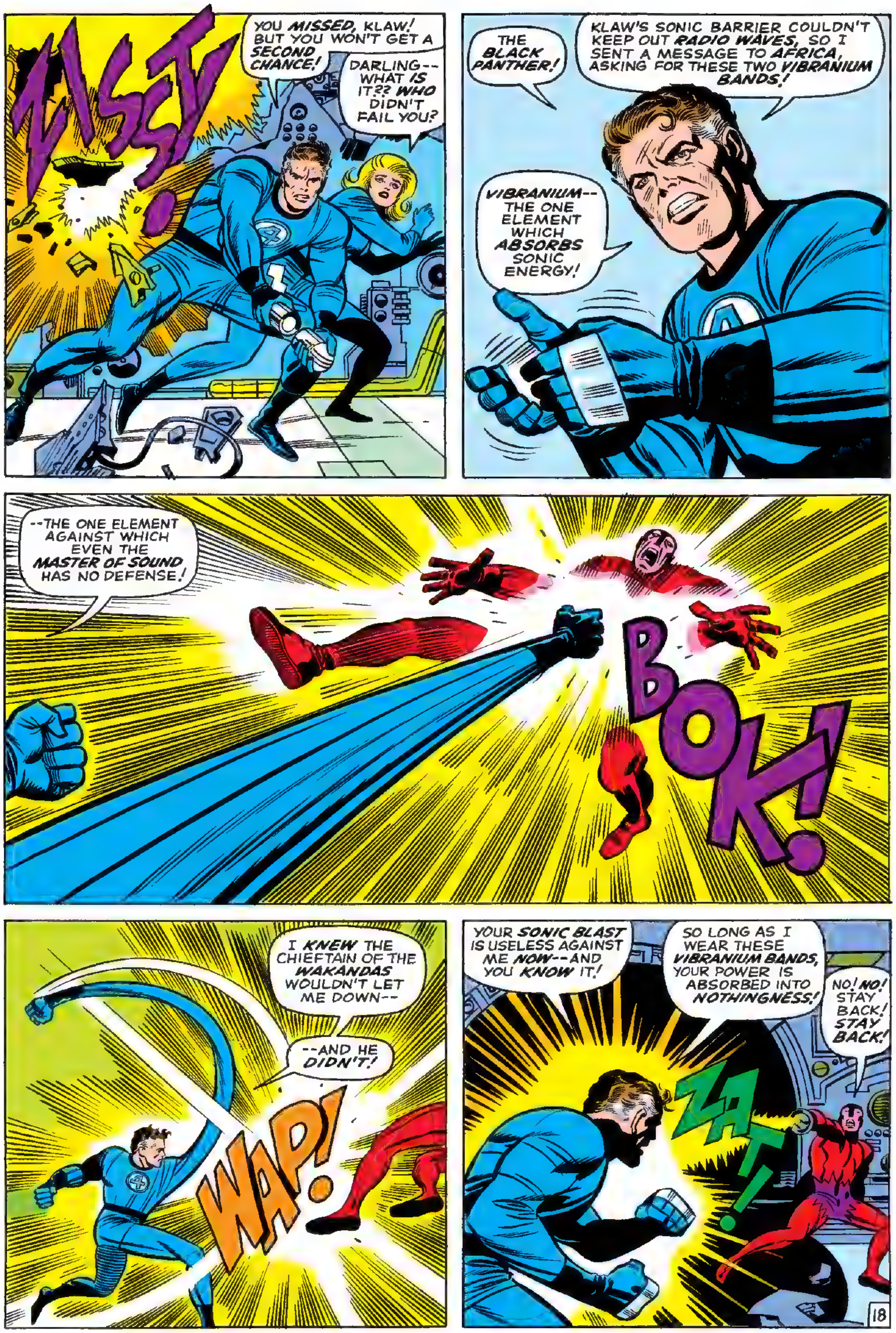

ZZZZZZZ
WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO YOU TO RUN-- WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO YOU TO BECOME INVISIBLE--WHEN I CAN SENSITIZE ALL THE WALLS AND CEILINGS OF THIS ENTIRE FLOOR?!!
FOR, THE APPLICATION OF SONIC POWER IS THE PERFECT ANSWER TO YOUR NOW-USELESS INVISIBILITY!
HE'S RIGHT! HE'S CAUSING MY LIGHTEST FOOTFALLS TO SOUND LIKE THE BEATING OF A BASS DRUM!
I CAN'T EVEN HOPE TO ESCAPE FROM HIM WHEN HE CAN SO CLEARLY HEAR MY EVERY STEP!
BOOM!
BOOM!
BOOM!
BOOM! BOOM!
SOUND IS THE GREATEST WEAPON IN ALL THE WORLD! IT CAN PENETRATE ANYTHING--OVERCOME ANYTHING--AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL--DESTROY ANYTHING!
AH! YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN! YOU FINALLY APPRECIATE THE UTTER FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO DEFY ME!
BOOM!
BOOM!
BOOM!
BOOM
BUT, YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED YOUR FIGHTING SPIRIT--YOUR UNQUENCHABLE DESIRE FOR VICTORY!
YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT I DARE NOT TRUST YOU!
THEREFORE, WITH ONE SONIC IMMOBILIZER BEAM I SHALL DEPRIVE YOU OF YOUR POWER --AND PERHAPS, YOUR LIFE AS WELL!
BUT, BEFORE THE FATEFUL SONIC BEAM CAN STRIKE ITS INTENDED VICTIM, AN ORANGE-SKINNED POWERHOUSE HURLS SUE ASIDE, TAKING THE FULL FORCE OF THE STRANGE BLAST UPON HIS OWN FANTASTIC BODY...!
SPIZZZT!
TAKE COVER, SUSIE GAL! THIS KINDA ROMPIN' AROUND IS MORE UP MY BLUE-EYED ALLEY!
BEN--!
ZZZZZZ
THE THING! IT--CAN'T BE!!
WELL THEN, WOULDJA BELIEVE ROCK HUDSON?
13

ZZISSSST!
IF YA THINK THAT NUTTY OVERSIZED KAZOO IS GONNA STOP ME--!
IT HAS TO STOP YOU! IT CAN STOP A HERD OF BUFFALO! IT CAN FELL THE TALLEST REDWOOD!
IT'S THE CONCENTRATED, SOLIDIFIED, CONVERTED ENERGY OF PURE SOUND!
YEAH? I'LL TRY'N REMEMBER THAT WHILE I'M CLOBBERIN' YA!
WISH I FELT AS SURE OF MYSELF AS I'M TRYIN' TO SOUND! THAT BLASTED GIZMO OF HIS IS MAKIN' ME FEEL AS WEAK AS A YANCY STREETER!
I'LL APPLY MORE POWER-- MORE-- STILL MORE! I'LL STOP YOU YET!
IT CANNOT AFFECT ME --BUT NO OTHER LIVING BEING CAN BEAR IT!
HIGHER AND HIGHER--STRONGER AND STRONGER, GROWS THE INDESCRIBABLE INTENSITY OF KLAW'S AWESOME SONIC BEAM--UNTIL THE ENTIRE BAXTER BUILDING IS ENGULFED IN A SHIMMERING, SPINE-TINGLING AURA OF SHEER DISCORDENT VIBRA ENERGY...!
BUT, SUCH AN UNRESTRAINED APPLICATION OF SEETHING FORCE CANNOT LONG BE CONTAINED! AND, SO IT IS, SECONDS LATER--
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED??
EVERY LIGHT IN THE CITY--BLEW OUT--AT THE SAME EXACT INSTANT!
IT MUST BE SOME SORT OF MAMMOTH POWER FAILURE!
WHATEVER HAPPENED --IT CAME FROM THE TOP OF THE BAXTER BUILDING!
IT'S THE FF's FAULT! THEM AND THEIR WEIRDO EXPERIMENTS!
BUT FURTHER AWAY THAN YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, ANOTHER EQUALLY MYSTIFYING EVENT IS TAKING PLACE, AS WE FIND JOHNNY STORM, WYATT WINGFOOT, AND THE UNCANNY CANINE CREATURE KNOWN AS LOCKJAW--
I DON'T KNOW WHERE LOCKJAW HAS BROUGHT US NOW, WITH THAT DIZZY DIMENSIONAL-TRANSPORT POWER OF HIS--BUT I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT ONE THING--
WHEREVER WE ARE--IT'S NOT ANY PLACE THAT EXISTS ON THE PLANET EARTH!
IT'S TOO BAD, JOHNNY!
YOU KEEP HOPING HE WILL LEAD YOU TO THE TRAPPED INHUMANS, SO THAT YOU CAN FIND THE GIRL YOU LOVE AGAIN--
YET, EACH DIMENSIONAL JOURNEY SEEMS TO TAKE US FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM OUR GOAL!

AND YET, I'VE GOT TO STAY WITH LOCKJAW--TO FOLLOW WHEREEVER HE GOES!
YET, IT SEEMS HE HAS BEEN TRAINED TO KEEP OTHERS AWAY FROM THE GREAT REFUGE!
ONLY HE HAS THE POWER TO PASS THRU THE BARRIER THAT IMPRISONS THE INHUMANS--THE BARRIER BEHIND WHICH CRYSTAL STILL IS TRAPPED!
HE IS MERELY DOING WHAT HE HAS BEEN TAUGHT!
I WONDER...
WE ARE MERELY STRANGERS TO HIM! THERE IS NO REASON FOR LOCKJAW TO OBEY US--TO WISH TO HELP US!
BUT, IF WE WERE TO WIN HIS CONFIDENCE--HIS TRUST--IF THERE WERE SOME WAY FOR US TO TRAIN HIM, JUST AS THE OTHERS HAVE TRAINED HIM--!
I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, WYATT! WHY CAN'T WE MAKE A LOYAL PET OF HIM--JUST AS THE INHUMANS DID?!!
BUT, IT'LL REQUIRE PATIENCE--KINDNESS--AND A DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL TRAINING!
BUT, WHO IS BETTER EQUIPPED FOR THE TASK THAN I? HAVE I NOT THE BLOOD OF THE COMANCHE IN MY VEINS? DID MY FOREFATHERS NOT TAME THE WILD STALLION--DID THEY NOT--WAIT!!
HE IS NATURALLY CAUTIOUS--OVERLY SUSPICIOUS! IN TRYING TO PAT HIM, I RECEIVED SOME SORT OF SUDDEN ENERGY SHOCK!
I'M AFRAID IT'S HOPELESS, BIG BUDDY!
HOPELESS? A STRANGE WORD TO HEAR FROM YOU, JOHNNY!
HE DOES NOT DECEIVE ME! HE FEARS THAT LOCKJAW MAY INJURE ME--HENCE HE WANTS ME TO FORSAKE MY PLAN! BUT, I MUST NOT!
IF THE DOG HAS COME TO THIS FORSAKEN WORLD, HE MUST HAVE A PURPOSE! I SUSPECT IT IS TO OBTAIN FOOD--FOOD SUCH AS EARTH CAN NEVER PROVIDE!
YOU MEAN--THOSE WHACKY-LOOKING THINGS GROWING OVER THERE--?
WELL, IT'S A CHANCE! I'LL BURN SOME OFF!
YOUR POWER OF FLAME IS TRULY CONVENIENT, JOHNNY--AT A TIME LIKE THIS!
SURE, PAL! I'M JUST A WALKIN', TALKIN' CHARCOAL GRILL!
I THINK WE HAVE GUESSED CORRECTLY! HE'S COMING TOWARDS THE STRANGE STEMS WITH GREAT EAGERNESS IN HIS EYES!
LET'S HOPE IT'S THE STEMS HE'S AFTER--AND NOT US!
WOW! I'LL SAY YOU WERE RIGHT! HE'S STARTING TO CHOMP 'EM DOWN LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW!
NOTICE HOW HE SEEMS TO RELEASE BOLTS OF ENERGY AS HE EATS! HE'S FOUND THE PERFECT FOOD!
ONCE HIS BELLY IS FULL, IT SHOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO WIN HIM OVER! AND THEN, WITH LUCK--ON TO THE INHUMANS!
15

NOW THEN, SINCE JOHNNY AND WYATT DON'T SEEM TO NEED ANY HELP FROM US AT THE MOMENT, THIS MIGHT BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO RETURN TO F.F. HQ, WHERE WE FIND--
WOOO-WHEEE! IF ANYONE EVER TOLD ME I COULD BE KNOCKED COLD BY SOME NUTTY WAVES OF SOUND, I'D 'UVE FLATTENED 'IM!
I DUNNO HOW YA DID IT, KLAW--BUT I'M GONNA MAKE SURE I GIT YA OUTTA CIRCULATION--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER!
LEASTWAYS, I WILL--WHEN THE BLAMED ROOM STOPS SPINNIN' AROUND!
NO, YOU LUMBERING FOOL! YOU SHALL NOT HAVE A SECOND CHANCE!
YOUR UNDESERVED STRENGTH IS FAR GREATER THAN I SUSPECTED! YOU HAVE SURVIVED A FORCE WHICH AFFECTED THE ELECTRIC POWER OF AN ENTIRE CITY!
BUT, THOUGH YOU STILL LIVE, IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME BEFORE YOU ARE FULLY RECOVERED AGAIN!
AND KLAW DOES NOT CHOOSE TO WAIT!
I'LL GETCHA YET! SO HELP ME--I'LL GETCHA!
YOUR FEEBLE THREATS ARE OF NO INTEREST TO THE MASTER OF SOUND!
NOW, BEFORE HE CAN INTERFERE, I'LL FINISH OFF THE GIRL AND HER TRAPPED HUSBAND!
WHEN THE BLACK PANTHER HEARS OF THEIR FATE, HE IS CERTAIN TO SEEK ME OUT--FOR VENGEANCE!
ALL I WILL HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR HIM TO APPEAR--AND THE VENGEANCE THAT ENSUES WILL BE MINE!
AH! I THOUGHT I'D FIND YOU HERE--VAINLY ATTEMPTING TO PASS THRU MY SONIC BARRIER TO REACH THE TRAPPED MR. FANTASTIC!
KLAW!
AT YOUR SERVICE, MY DEAR!
I SHALL NOT KEEP YOU FROM YOUR BELOVED ANY LONGER!
ONE SONIC REVERSION BLAST WILL NULLIFY MY BARRIER--PERMITTING YOU TO PASS THRU!
ZISST
HE MEANS IT! THE BARRIER IS BROKEN! BUT --WHY?
16

SUE, DARLING-- STAY BACK-- DON'T--
TOO LATE! HE TRICKED YOU! HE WANTED YOU TO JOIN ME!
BUT, NO MATTER! WE'LL BEAT HIM YET! I'LL FIND A WAY SOMEHOW!
REED--IT'S KLAW-- THE MASTER OF SOUND! HE'S RETURNED!
YOUR HUSBAND HAS ALREADY DEDUCED THAT RATHER OBVIOUS FACT, MRS. RICHARDS!
BUT, IT WILL DO NEITHER OF YOU ANY GOOD!
SO! YOU'VE ACTUALLY SUCCEEDED IN TRANSFORMING YOURSELF INTO A BEING OF SOLIDIFIED SOUND!
AH, YOU COMPREHEND QUICKLY, RICHARDS! A PITY SUCH A BRILLIANT MIND WILL SOON BE DESTROYED--TOGETHER WITH THAT OF YOUR NEW BRIDE!
OTHERS, TOO, HAVE THREATENED US IN THE PAST, KLAW-- BUT WE'RE STILL HERE-- AS YOU CAN SEE!
I ADMIRE YOUR CONFIDENCE, RICHARDS! TOO BAD IT IS SO MISPLACED! AND NOW--IF YOU HAVE ANY LAST WORDS TO SAY, I SUGGEST YOU SAY THEM--QUICKLY!
BEHIND ME, SUE! THIS IS THE SHOWDOWN!
BUT, IT ISN'T GOING TO END IN THE WAY THAT MADMAN EXPECTS--!
EVEN AS THE STEELY-EYED MR. FANTASTIC SPEAKS, A REMOTE CONTROL PACKET MISSILE ZOOMS DOWN FROM THE ATMOSPHERE, HOMING IN ON THE BAXTER BUILDING AFTER A LIGHTNING JOURNEY HALF-WAY AROUND THE GLOBE--!
YOUR FALSE BRAVURA HAS AVAILED YOU NOTHING, RICHARDS! THIS IS YOUR FINISH--!
YOU'RE TOO LATE, KLAW! LOOK-- LOOK OUT THE WINDOW!
A MINIATURE ROCKET--COMING TO A HALT--RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!
I KNEW HE WOULDN'T FAIL ME!
REED!! WHAT IS IT, DARLING?? WHAT DOES IT MEAN??
17


ZISST!
YOU MISSED, KLAW! BUT YOU WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE!
DARLING-- WHAT IS IT?? WHO DIDN'T FAIL YOU?
THE BLACK PANTHER!
KLAW'S SONIC BARRIER COULDN'T KEEP OUT RADIO WAVES, SO I SENT A MESSAGE TO AFRICA, ASKING FOR THESE TWO VIBRANIUM BANDS!
VIBRANIUM-- THE ONE ELEMENT WHICH ABSORBS SONIC ENERGY!
--THE ONE ELEMENT AGAINST WHICH EVEN THE MASTER OF SOUND HAS NO DEFENSE!
BOK!
I KNEW THE CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS WOULDN'T LET ME DOWN--
--AND HE DIDN'T!
WAP!
YOUR SONIC BLAST IS USELESS AGAINST ME NOW--AND YOU KNOW IT!
SO LONG AS I WEAR THESE VIBRANIUM BANDS, YOUR POWER IS ABSORBED INTO NOTHINGNESS!
NO! NO! STAY BACK! STAY BACK!
ZAT!
18

EVEN THOUGH I CANNOT HARM YOU, I'LL BLAST THE FLOOR OUT FROM BENEATH YOUR FEET.!
THAT'S NOT MUCH OF A THREAT, KLAW... NOT TO A MAN WHO CAN STRETCH ENOUGH TO USE THE WALLS FOR SUPPORT!
BUT NOW--IT'S MY TURN TO ATTACK!
ZAP!
AND I'VE GOT POWERS YOU HAVEN'T EVEN DREAMED OF--!
SWOOOOOM!
N-NOOO..!
EVEN A SONIC BLAST CAN BE COMPLETELY SMOTHERED...
THWUMMM!
--LIKE THIS!
WHERE IS HE?? LEMME AT 'IM! I'LL PULVERIZE THE BUM!!
HEY! I DON'T GIT IT!! WHERE'D HE GO?
HE'S RIGHT HERE, BEN!
JUST LET ME UNWRAP MYSELF, AND YOU'LL SEE...!
I FORCED HIM TO DRAIN HIS LAST BIT OF SONIC ENERGY--- WHILE MY VIBRANIUM INSULATORS ABSORBED IT INTO NOTHINGNESS!
IN OTHER WORDS, OLD FRIEND--- HE'S POWER-LESS NOW!
IT'S HIM! BUT--WHAT'DJA DO TO 'IM??
19.

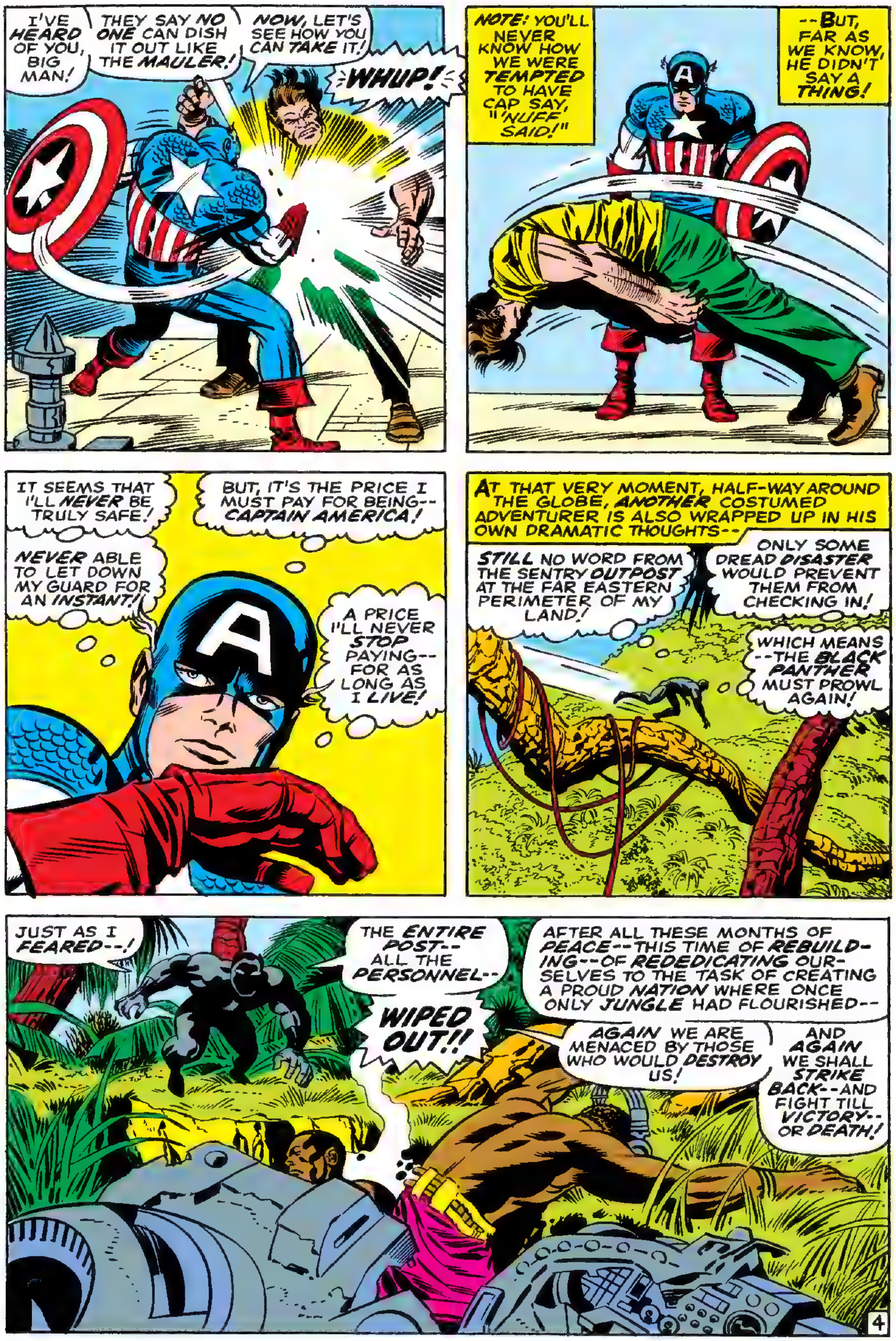
I'LL JUST MAKE SURE OF IT BY GITTIN' RIDDA THIS LITTLE SOUND-SHOOTER OF HIS!
REED, MY DARLING!! YOU DID IT! YOU DEFEATED HIM! BUT... LOOK AT YOU... YOU'VE BEEN HURT--!
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, HONEY! JUST A FEW BRUISES! BUT... IT WAS A CLOSE ONE!
IMAGINE! LOVER-BOY REED GITTIN' INTO A REAL CLOBBERIN' MATCH ALL BY HIS LONESOME!
IT'S KIND'A LIKE THE MILLINEEYUM!
BUT, WHAT WILL BECOME OF KLAW NOW? HOW CAN WE BE SURE HE WON'T BE ABLE TO MENACE MANKIND AGAIN WITH THAT HORRIBLE POWER OF HIS?
THE BLACK PANTHER FURNISHED THE PERFECT ANSWER, SUE!
THE POLICE CAN KEEP HIM SAFELY IMPRISONED WITHIN A CELL CONSTRUCTED OF RAW VIBRANIUM... LIKE THESE TWO WRIST BANDS I'M WEARING!
..AND, SPEAKING OF OUR FAR-OFF FRIEND...
I TRUST THE VIBRANIUM YOU REQUESTED ARRIVED IN TIME, REED RICHARDS?
JUST LIKE THE CAVALRY CHARGE IN A WESTERN FILM!
WE CAN ALL REST EASIER NOW, FOR KLAW ISN'T LIKELY TO THREATEN ANYONE EVER AGAIN!
BUT, WE OWE OUR VICTORY TO THE BLACK PANTHER!
YOU MUST TELL HIM HOW GRATEFUL WE ARE, DEAR!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR TALK OF GRATITUDE! A BOND EXISTS BETWEEN US... A BOND FAR STRONGER THAN MERE WORDS OF THANKS!
FOR TRULY, WE SHARE EACH OTHER'S RESPECT... EACH OTHER'S DEEP AND ABIDING FRIENDSHIP!
BOY! IF HONEST ABE WUZ BUSY, I'LL BET THE PANTHER COULDA WRIT THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS FOR 'IM WITHOUT BATTIN' AN EYE!
THERE IS NOBILITY IN THAT MAN, BEN!
BUT NOW, OUR SCENE CHANGES... AS WE VISIT A FAR-OFF KINGDOM IN A REMOTE SECTION OF EUROPE...
AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE... EVERYTHING I BEHOLD IS MINE!!
MY REALM! MY KINGDOM--
BUT WAIT! WHAT IS THAT??
A MAN!! FLYING OVER THE... NO! IT IS NOT A MAN!
IT IS FAR MORE THAN MERELY A MAN!
HE HAS COME TO REST... ATOP A MOUNTAIN... ATOP MY MOUNTAIN!
THUS, FATE HAS DELIVERED THE SILVER SURFER INTO MY HANDS!
next: DOCTOR DOOM!
20.

TALES OF SUSPENSE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IRON MAN
and
CAPTAIN AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
JAN 97
"THE COMING OF... WHIPLASH!"

CAPTAIN AMERICA, LIVING LEGEND of WORLD WAR II
AND SO IT BEGINS--!
RE-INTRODUCING: THE BLACK PANTHER!
CAP HAS JUST RECEIVED AN URGENT CALL FOR HELP-- BUT, UPON REACHING THE SITE, HE SUDDENLY FINDS--
IT'S A TRAP! THE ROOF-TOP'S BEEN MINED!
PHANTASMAGORICALLY PRODUCED BY: STAN (THE MAN) LEE & JACK (KING) KIRBY
EMBELLISHED BY: JOE SINNOTT
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
1

THE BLAST-- IS HURLING ME--OFF THE ROOF!
BUT--IF I CAN JUST HOOK MY FOOT--ON THE EDGE OF THE MOLDING--!
I DID IT!
NOW-- IF ONLY I CAN-- HANG ON!
I'M SAFE-- FOR NOW!
HAVE TO STAY THIS WAY--TILL MY HEAD CLEARS--!
I THOUGHT I HEARD --VOICES!
YOU 'N YER BLASTED BOOBY TRAPS!
HE'S STILL ALIVE!
BUT HE WON'T BE FOR LONG-- NOT AFTER I TOSS THIS GRENADE!
STOW IT, CREEP!
WE'LL DO IT MY WAY NOW!
AWRIGHT, MAULER-- BUT BE QUICK ABOUT IT!
WHAT'S THE RUSH?
HE AINT GOIN' NOWHERE!
CAREFUL! HE'S TRICKY! HE MAY JUST BE FAKING!
BIG DEAL! HE'S DONE FOR--AND HE KNOWS IT!

I'LL BE TOP MAN IN THE SYNDICATE WHEN THEY FIND OUT THAT I'M THE GUY WHO POLISHED OFF CAPTAIN AMERICA!
HURRY, YOU FOOL!
I JUST SAW HIM MOVE! HE SHIFTED HIS BALANCE --HE'S UP TO SOME-THING--!
NUTS! WHAT CAN HE DO NOW??
I CAN BUTT YOU WITH MY HEAD, FOR ONE THING--!
YEOWFFF!
CRACK!
DROP THAT IRON, MISTER!
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE! NOW IT'S MY TURN!
I'LL-- GIT YA-- FER THAT--!
THIS'LL KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE WHILE I GET BACK TO THE MAULER!
DON'T WORRY-- IT WON'T TAKE TOO LONG!
THOP!
3

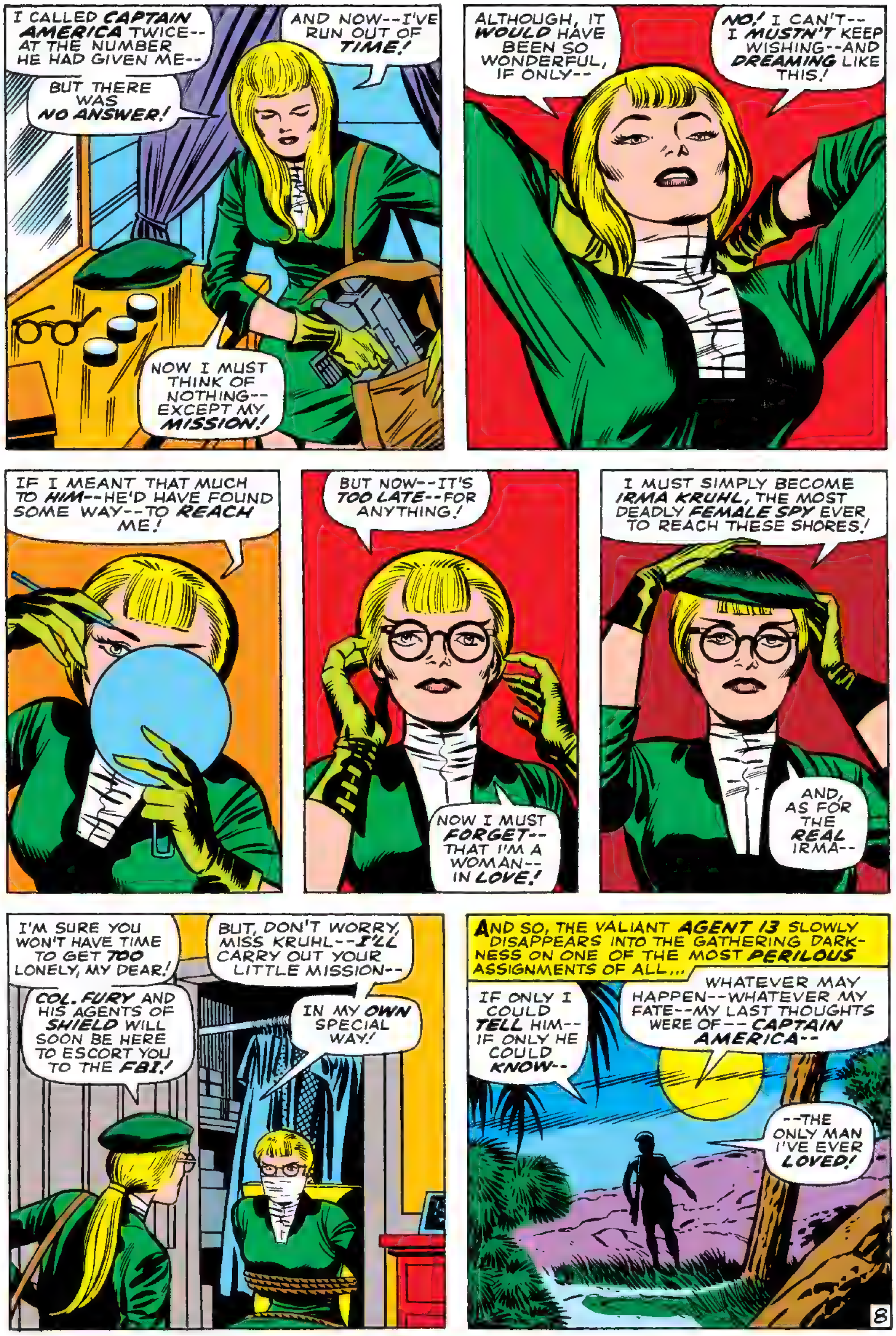


I'VE HEARD OF YOU, BIG MAN!
THEY SAY NO ONE CAN DISH IT OUT LIKE THE MAULER!
NOW, LET'S SEE HOW YOU CAN TAKE IT!
WHUP!
NOTE: YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW WE WERE TEMPTED TO HAVE CAP SAY, "'NUFF SAID!"
--BUT, FAR AS WE KNOW, HE DIDN'T SAY A THING!
IT SEEMS THAT I'LL NEVER BE TRULY SAFE!
BUT, IT'S THE PRICE I MUST PAY FOR BEING--CAPTAIN AMERICA!
NEVER ABLE TO LET DOWN MY GUARD FOR AN INSTANT!
A PRICE I'LL NEVER STOP PAYING--FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE!
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, HALF-WAY AROUND THE GLOBE, ANOTHER COSTUMED ADVENTURER IS ALSO WRAPPED UP IN HIS OWN DRAMATIC THOUGHTS--
STILL NO WORD FROM THE SENTRY OUTPOST AT THE FAR EASTERN PERIMETER OF MY LAND!
ONLY SOME DREAD DISASTER WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM CHECKING IN!
WHICH MEANS--THE BLACK PANTHER MUST PROWL AGAIN!
JUST AS I FEARED--!
THE ENTIRE POST--ALL THE PERSONNEL--
WIPED OUT!!
AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS OF PEACE--THIS TIME OF REBUILD-ING--OF REDEDICATING OUR-SELVES TO THE TASK OF CREATING A PROUD NATION WHERE ONCE ONLY JUNGLE HAD FLOURISHED--
AGAIN WE ARE MENACED BY THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY US!
AND AGAIN WE SHALL STRIKE BACK--AND FIGHT TILL VICTORY--OR DEATH!
4

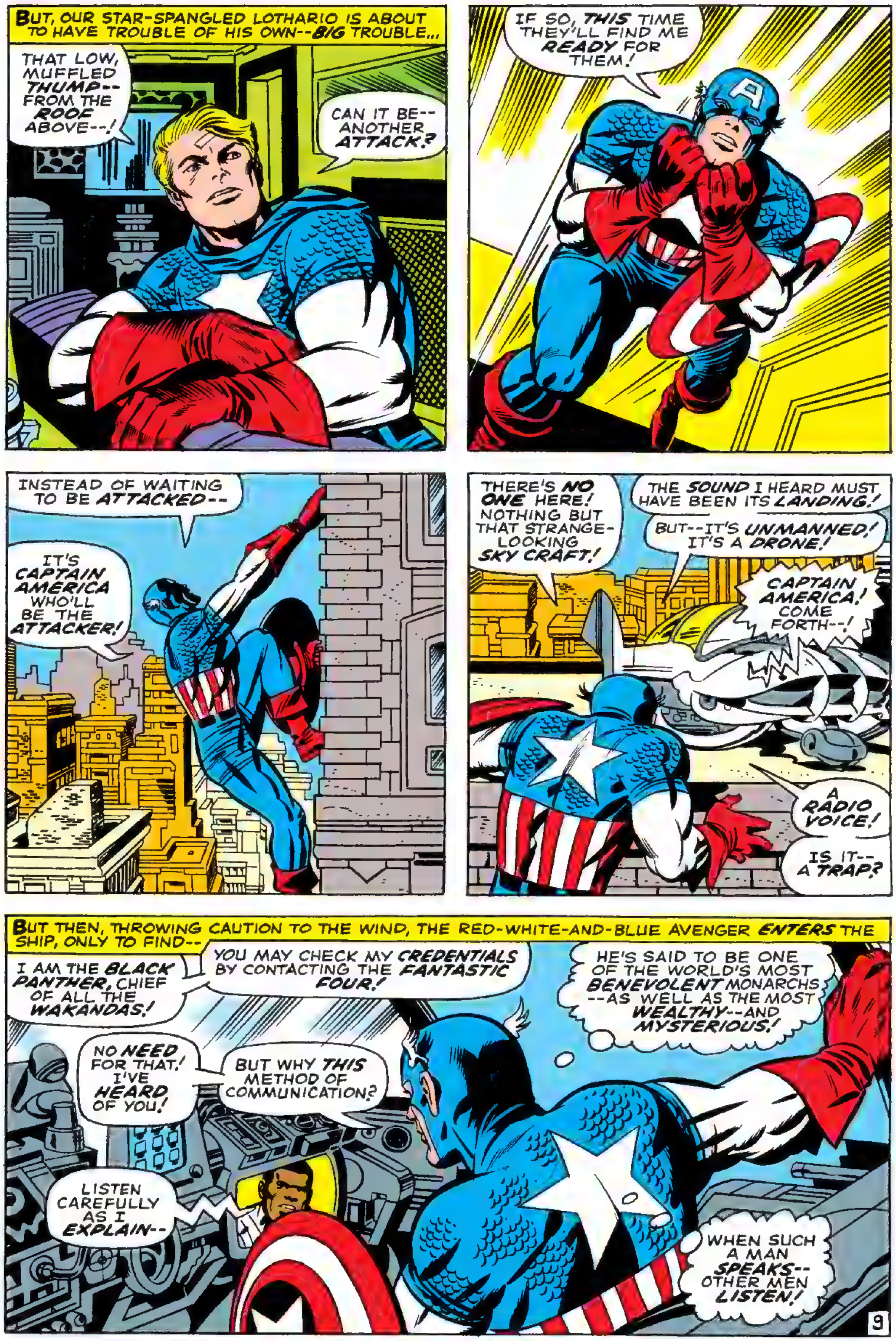
BUT THE SCENT OF MAN STILL LINGERS!
WHOEVER OUR UNSEEN, UNKNOWN ENEMY IS, HE CANNOT BE FAR AWAY!
AND WHEREVER HE MAY BE LURKING, THE BLACK PANTHER WILL TRACK HIM DOWN!
THE SOUNDS-- THE SCENTS-- GROW STRONGER!
THERE ARE MANY FIGURES--MOVING JUST AHEAD--!
BUT NEVER TOO MANY FOR ME!
ASSASSINS!! IT WAS YOU WHO DESTROYED MY OUTPOST!!
THE BLACK PANTHER!! WE WERE WARNED TO STEER CLEAR OF HIM!
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? WE OUTNUMBER HIM SIX-TO-ONE!!
--AND WE'RE ARMED WITH STUN-BOLT WEAPONS WHICH CAN--
UNHHH!
WHO IS YOUR LEADER?? WHAT IS YOUR MISSION??
SPEAK! I COMMAND YOU!
HE SOUNDS LIKE A MAN WHO'S USED TO BEIN' OBEYED!
HE'S STRONGER THAN WE THOUGHT!
BUT NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND THIS--!

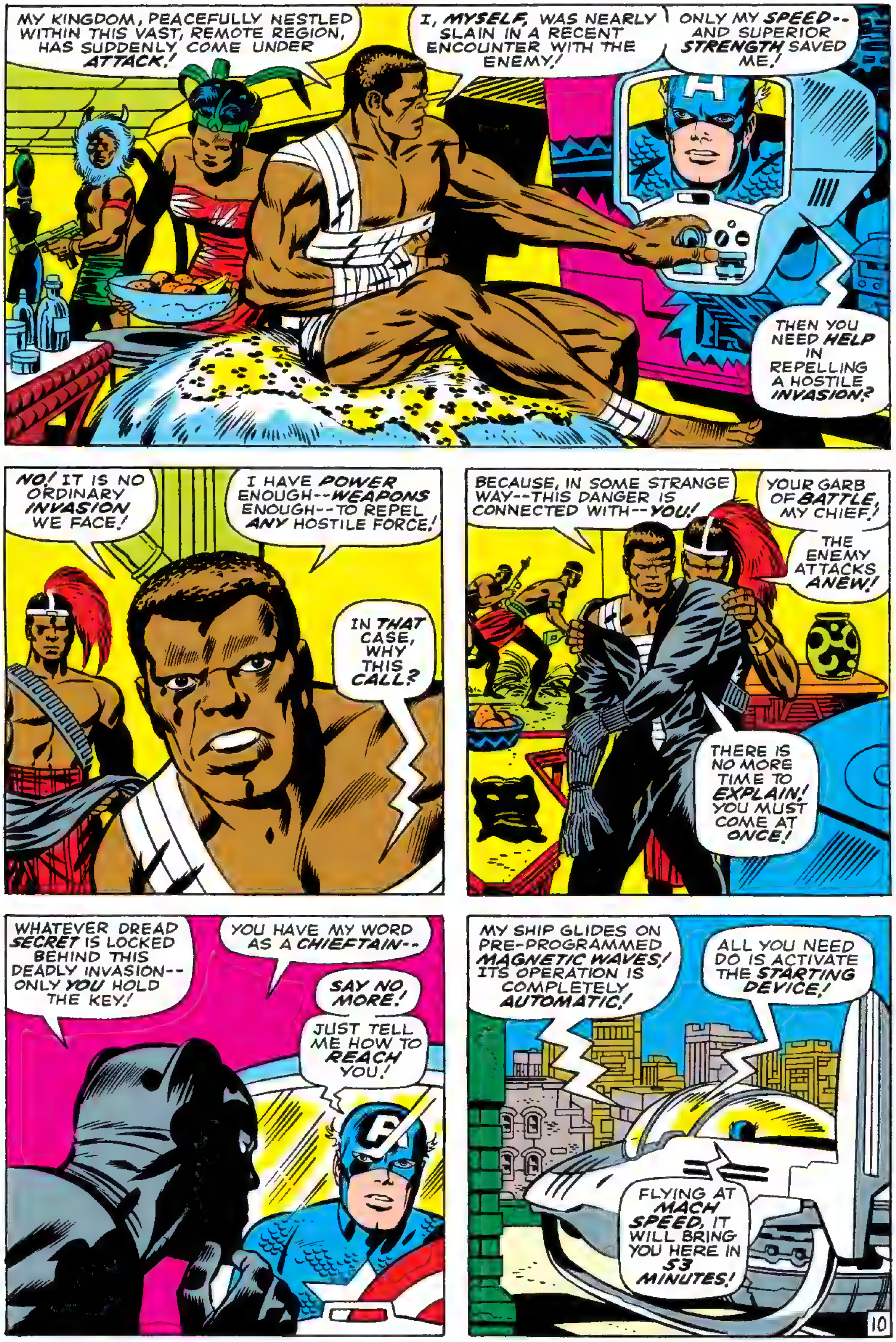
WHILE, BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, A WEARY, BUT VICTORIOUS STEVE ROGERS FINISHES SCANNING A SET OF POLICE "MUG SHOTS"--
JUST AS I THOUGHT--
THEY WERE BOTH MEMBERS OF THE SYNDICATE!
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, SON! YOU'RE HIGH ON THEIR RUB-OUT LIST!
NOW WE'D BETTER LET THE DOC LOOK AT YOU BEFORE YOU LEAVE...
INCREDIBLE! I'VE NEVER CHECKED ANYONE IN SUCH SUPERB PHYSICAL CONDITION!
BUT I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE TO BE IN TOP SHAPE TO FOLLOW YOUR PARTICULAR, EH, LINE OF WORK!
WELL, IT IS AN ASSET IF YOU'RE NOT OVERLY ANEMIC, DOC!
YOU'RE FIT AS A FIDDLE, ROGERS!
YOU CAN LEAVE ANY TIME!
WE'RE MIGHTY CLOSE TO NABBING SOME OF THE SYNDICATE'S TOP MEN, CAP!
IT MIGHT BE WISE FOR YOU TO TAKE A VACATION FOR A WHILE--IN SOME OTHER CITY-- JUST UNTIL WE GET THEIR MOST DANGEROUS HOODS BEHIND BARS!
I APPRECIATE THE ADVICE, SIR--BUT I'VE NEVER YET TURNED MY BACK ON A FIGHT!
MINUTES LATER, AS THE STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER IS GIVEN A LIFT ACROSS TOWN--
I STILL WISH YOU'D CONSIDER WHAT I SAID, STEVE!
NO POINT IN TAKING NEEDLESS CHANCES!
OKAY, CAPTAIN --I WILL THINK ABOUT IT!
P.D.
I KNOW HE'S RIGHT!
AND YET-- WHERE COULD I GO? WHAT COULD I DO?
6

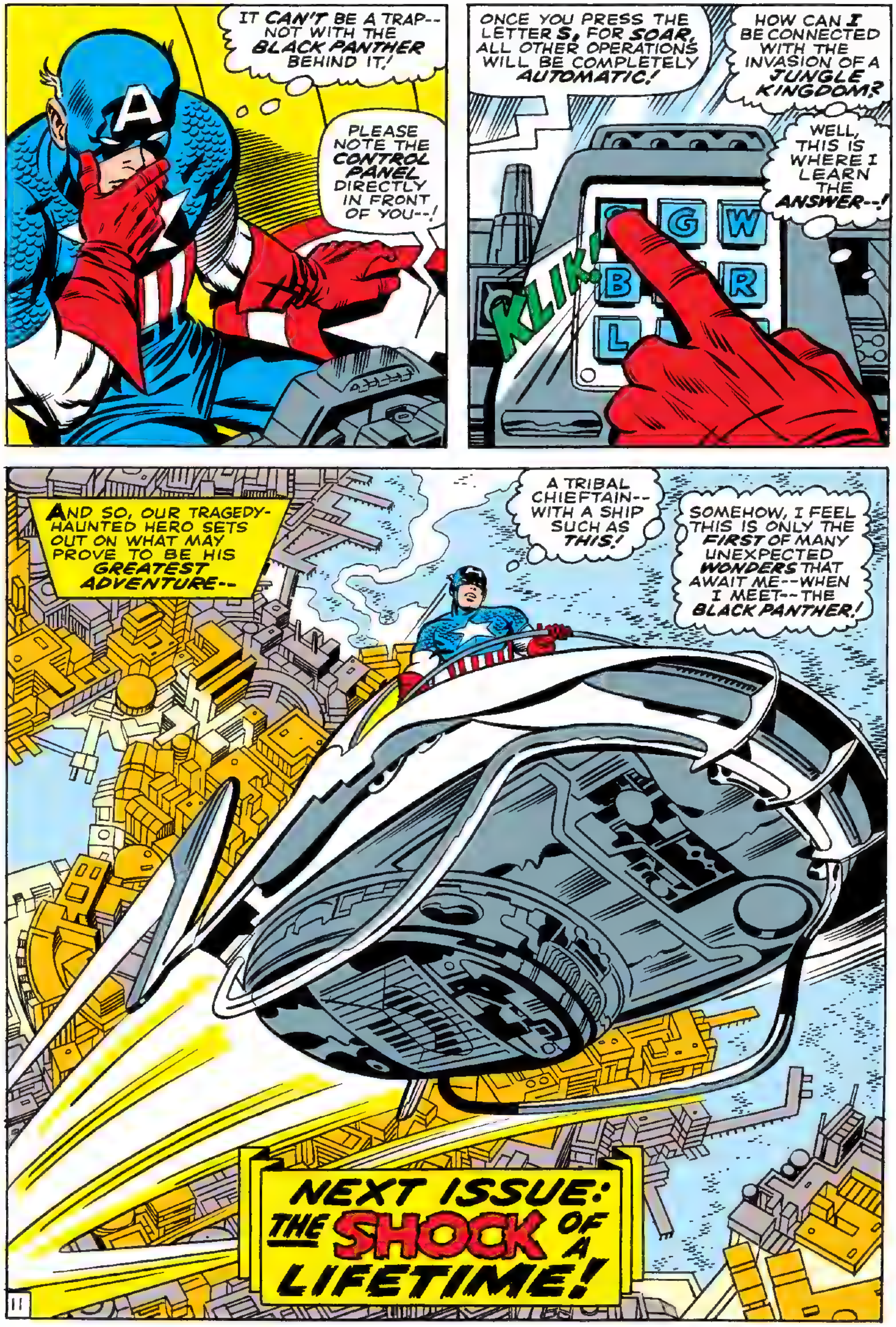
FINALLY--
THANKS FOR THE LIFT, CAPTAIN!
DON'T MENTION IT, MISTER!
JUST TAKE THE ADVICE OF AN OLD WAR-HORSE AND SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN!
AND IF YOU NEED HELP, SING OUT!
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR, SON!
THEY'RE UNDERPAID--OVERWORKED--AND UNAPPRECIATED--
NO ONE CALLS THEM SUPERHEROES, OR MAKES ANY FUSS OVER THEM--!
AND YET, IT'S MEN LIKE THAT--THE THOUSANDS OF UNSUNG COPS ON THE BEAT--WHO KEEP OUR STREETS FROM TURNING INTO JUNGLES--
AND WHO MAKE OUR CITIES SAFE--EVEN FOR THE UNTHINKING COP-HATERS THEMSELVES!
BUT, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW HE WAS RIGHT--I CAN'T RUN FROM THOSE WHO THREATEN ME!
IT'S TOO LATE NOW--TO START BEING CAUTIOUS!
BESIDES, I NEVER KNOW--WHEN SHE MAY NEED ME!
STRANGE--HOW I STILL THINK OF HER--AS SHE!
ALL I KNOW OF HER IS THAT SHE RESEMBLES THE GIRL I ONCE LOVED--AND LOST--SO MANY YEARS AGO!
NICK FURY CALLS HER AGENT 13--BUT TO ME, SHE'S ALL I'VE EVER DREAMED OF--ALL I'VE EVER LONGED FOR--!
YET, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME--OR WHERE TO FIND HER!
AND, EVEN AS THE MELANCHOLY ADVENTURER THINKS HIS OWN SOMBER THOUGHTS--MANY MILES AWAY WE FIND--
I'D BEST TAKE MY SPECIAL SHIELD ROCKET PISTOL--
ON A MISSION LIKE THIS, ANYTHING MAY HAPPEN!
7

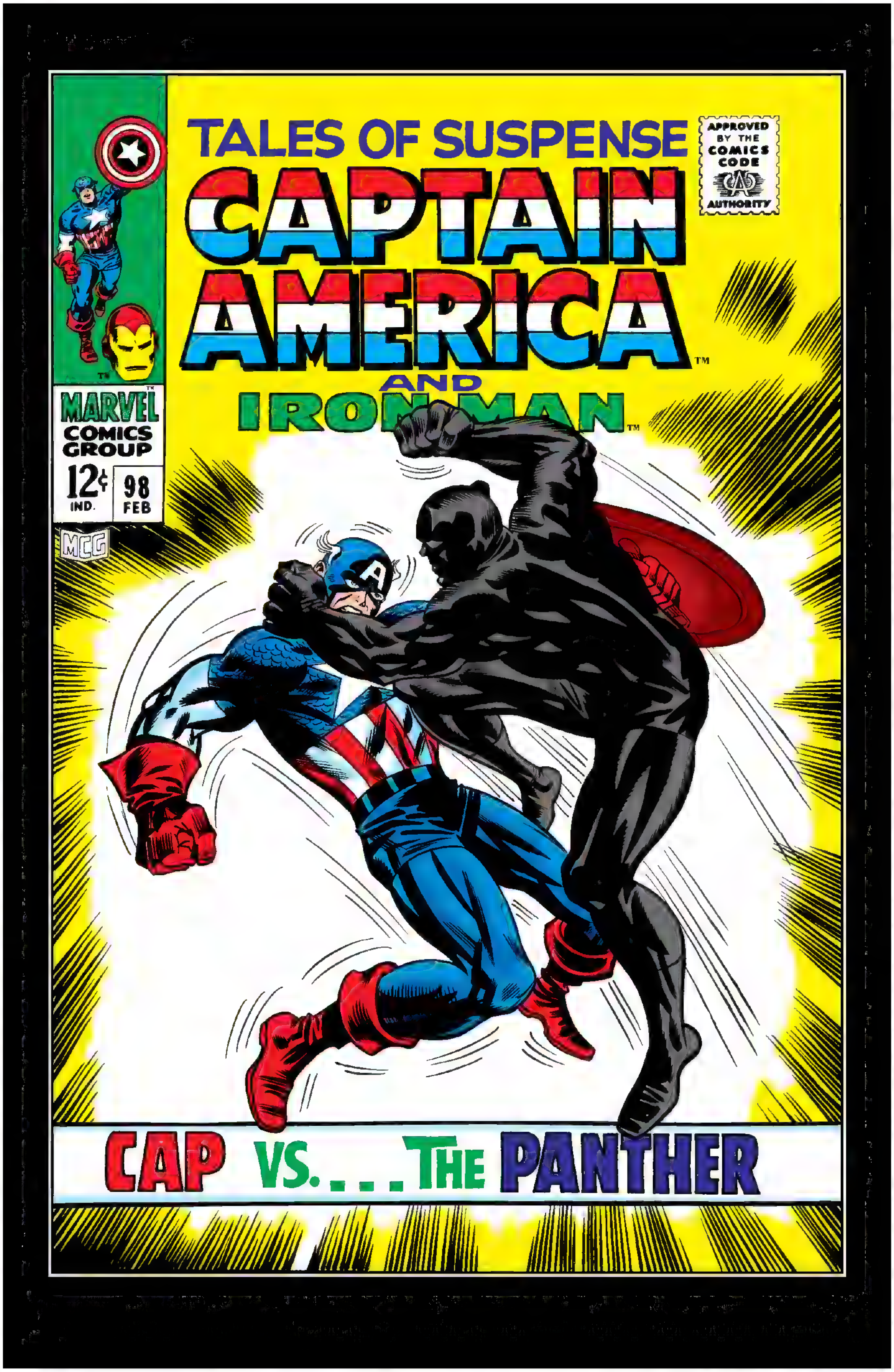


I CALLED CAPTAIN AMERICA TWICE-- AT THE NUMBER HE HAD GIVEN ME--
BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER!
AND NOW--I'VE RUN OUT OF TIME!
NOW I MUST THINK OF NOTHING-- EXCEPT MY MISSION!
ALTHOUGH, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SO WONDERFUL, IF ONLY--
NO! I CAN'T-- I MUSTN'T KEEP WISHING--AND DREAMING LIKE THIS!
IF I MEANT THAT MUCH TO HIM--HE'D HAVE FOUND SOME WAY--TO REACH ME!
BUT NOW--IT'S TOO LATE--FOR ANYTHING!
NOW I MUST FORGET-- THAT I'M A WOMAN-- IN LOVE!
I MUST SIMPLY BECOME IRMA KRUHL, THE MOST DEADLY FEMALE SPY EVER TO REACH THESE SHORES!
AND, AS FOR THE REAL IRMA--
I'M SURE YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO GET TOO LONELY, MY DEAR!
COL. FURY AND HIS AGENTS OF SHIELD WILL SOON BE HERE TO ESCORT YOU TO THE FBI!
BUT, DON'T WORRY, MISS KRUHL--I'LL CARRY OUT YOUR LITTLE MISSION--
IN MY OWN SPECIAL WAY!
AND SO, THE VALIANT AGENT 13 SLOWLY DISAPPEARS INTO THE GATHERING DARKNESS ON ONE OF THE MOST PERILOUS ASSIGNMENTS OF ALL...
IF ONLY I COULD TELL HIM-- IF ONLY HE COULD KNOW--
WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN--WHATEVER MY FATE--MY LAST THOUGHTS WERE OF--CAPTAIN AMERICA--
--THE ONLY MAN I'VE EVER LOVED!
8


BUT, OUR STAR-SPANGLED LOTHARIO IS ABOUT TO HAVE TROUBLE OF HIS OWN--BIG TROUBLE...
THAT LOW, MUFFLED THUMP--FROM THE ROOF ABOVE--!
CAN IT BE--ANOTHER ATTACK?
IF SO, THIS TIME THEY'LL FIND ME READY FOR THEM!
INSTEAD OF WAITING TO BE ATTACKED--
IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA WHO'LL BE THE ATTACKER!
THERE'S NO ONE HERE! NOTHING BUT THAT STRANGE-LOOKING SKY CRAFT!
THE SOUND I HEARD MUST HAVE BEEN ITS LANDING!
BUT--IT'S UNMANNED! IT'S A DRONE!
CAPTAIN AMERICA! COME FORTH--!
A RADIO VOICE!
IS IT--A TRAP?
BUT THEN, THROWING CAUTION TO THE WIND, THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER ENTERS THE SHIP, ONLY TO FIND--
I AM THE BLACK PANTHER, CHIEF OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!
YOU MAY CHECK MY CREDENTIALS BY CONTACTING THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
HE'S SAID TO BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BENEVOLENT MONARCHS--AS WELL AS THE MOST WEALTHY--AND MYSTERIOUS!
NO NEED FOR THAT! I'VE HEARD OF YOU!
BUT WHY THIS METHOD OF COMMUNICATION?
LISTEN CAREFULLY AS I EXPLAIN--
WHEN SUCH A MAN SPEAKS--OTHER MEN LISTEN!
9


MY KINGDOM, PEACEFULLY NESTLED WITHIN THIS VAST, REMOTE REGION, HAS SUDDENLY COME UNDER ATTACK!
I, MYSELF, WAS NEARLY SLAIN IN A RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY!
ONLY MY SPEED-- AND SUPERIOR STRENGTH SAVED ME!
THEN YOU NEED HELP IN REPELLING A HOSTILE INVASION?
NO! IT IS NO ORDINARY INVASION WE FACE!
I HAVE POWER ENOUGH--WEAPONS ENOUGH--TO REPEL ANY HOSTILE FORCE!
IN THAT CASE, WHY THIS CALL?
BECAUSE, IN SOME STRANGE WAY--THIS DANGER IS CONNECTED WITH--YOU!
YOUR GARB OF BATTLE, MY CHIEF!
THE ENEMY ATTACKS ANEW!
THERE IS NO MORE TIME TO EXPLAIN! YOU MUST COME AT ONCE!
WHATEVER DREAD SECRET IS LOCKED BEHIND THIS DEADLY INVASION-- ONLY YOU HOLD THE KEY!
YOU HAVE MY WORD AS A CHIEFTAIN--
SAY NO MORE!
JUST TELL ME HOW TO REACH YOU!
MY SHIP GLIDES ON PRE-PROGRAMMED MAGNETIC WAVES! ITS OPERATION IS COMPLETELY AUTOMATIC!
ALL YOU NEED DO IS ACTIVATE THE STARTING DEVICE!
FLYING AT MACH SPEED, IT WILL BRING YOU HERE IN 53 MINUTES!


IT CAN'T BE A TRAP-- NOT WITH THE BLACK PANTHER BEHIND IT!
PLEASE NOTE THE CONTROL PANEL DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF YOU--!
ONCE YOU PRESS THE LETTER S, FOR SOAR, ALL OTHER OPERATIONS WILL BE COMPLETELY AUTOMATIC!
HOW CAN I BE CONNECTED WITH THE INVASION OF A JUNGLE KINGDOM?
WELL, THIS IS WHERE I LEARN THE ANSWER--!
KLIK!
AND SO, OUR TRAGEDY-HAUNTED HERO SETS OUT ON WHAT MAY PROVE TO BE HIS GREATEST ADVENTURE--
A TRIBAL CHIEFTAIN-- WITH A SHIP SUCH AS THIS!
SOMEHOW, I FEEL THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY UNEXPECTED WONDERS THAT AWAIT ME--WHEN I MEET--THE BLACK PANTHER!
NEXT ISSUE: THE SHOCK OF A LIFETIME!
11


TALES OF SUSPENSE
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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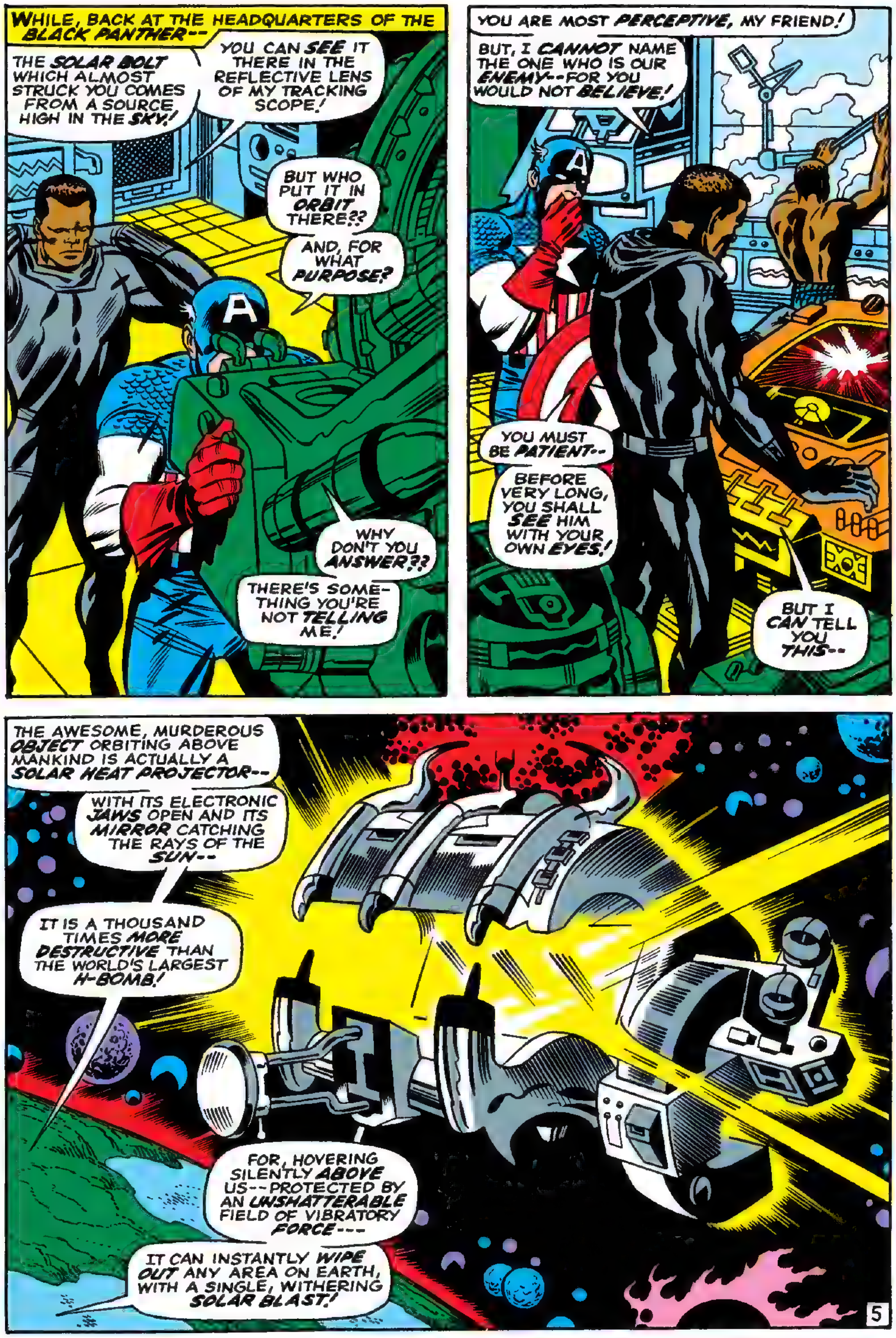
MCG
CAP VS. . . THE PANTHER

CAPTAIN AMERICA, LIVING LEGEND of WORLD WAR II
"THE CLAWS OF THE PANTHER!"
LOCKED WITHIN AN AUTOMATIC MAGNA-SHIP, CAP HURTLES INTO THE HEART OF DARKEST AFRICA, IN ANSWER TO AN URGENT SUMMONS FROM THE BLACK PANTHER--WHEN SUDDENLY--
A BLISTERING RAY--FROM SOMEWHERE IN SPACE!!
IT JUST MISSED THE SHIP--BY INCHES!
THE LATEST, AND POSSIBLY THE GREATEST CREATION BY THE AWARD-WINNING STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY
EMBELLISHED BY: JOE SINNOTT
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
WARNING! PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE UNEXPECTED SHOCK OF A LIFETIME WHICH AWAITS YOU AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS CATACLYSMIC CHRONICLE--!
1

THE BLAST ACTUALLY MELTED THAT MOUNTAIN--
BLAZING A PATH RIGHT ACROSS THE TERRAIN BELOW!
IF IT HAD STRUCK HERE--THE SHIP--AND MYSELF--WOULD HAVE BEEN TOTALLY DISINTEGRATED!
AND, SINCE THE PLANE IS OPERATED BY REMOTE CONTROL FROM THE BLACK PANTHER'S HEADQUARTERS--
I'M VIRTUALLY A HELPLESS PRISONER WITHIN THIS CABIN!
FROM ALL I'VE HEARD--ALL I'VE READ ABOUT THE BLACK PANTHER--
I TOOK A CALCULATED GAMBLE--DECIDED TO TRUST HIM!
BUT, IF IT'S JUST A DEADLY TRAP--
WAIT! I'M STARTING TO PLUMMET EARTHWARD!!
--ABOUT TO CRASH!
BUT THEN, AT THE LAST SECOND--
THE GROUND IS OPENING BELOW--!
A HIDDEN SUBMERGED LANDING FIELD--IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DENSEST JUNGLE!!
WHAT CAN IT ALL MEAN?
I'VE LANDED! BUT--THERE, FROM THE SHADOWS--
SILENT FIGURES RUSHING TOWARDS ME--LED BY--THE BLACK PANTHER!
I CAN'T BE SURE OF THEIR INTENTIONS--
BUT I'M THRU SETTING MYSELF UP AS A FALL GUY!
ZOK
2

I TOOK OUT THE FIRST WAVE--
BUT NOW-- THE PANTHER HIMSELF IS ATTACKING!
OKAY--IF THAT'S HOW HE WANTS IT--!
ONE BLOW OUGHT TO-- --WHA--!??--
HE'S FASTER THAN THE BEAST HE'S NAMED FOR!
STAND ASIDE, PANTHER! WE WILL SUBDUE HIM!
NO! VALOR SUCH AS HIS DESERVES BETTER THAN THAT!
WHATEVER HIS PURPOSE, HE'S FIGHTING LIKE A MAN!
ENOUGH, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
YOU HAVE PASSED YOUR TEST--LIKE A MASTER!
TEST? --WHAT TEST?!!
I HAD TO BE CERTAIN YOU WERE NOT AN IMPOSTOR!
WAS IT YOU WHO FIRED THAT RAY AT THE SHIP??
NO! THAT IS THE DANGER THAT FACES US ALL!
THE TIME HAS COME TO EXPLAIN--!
3

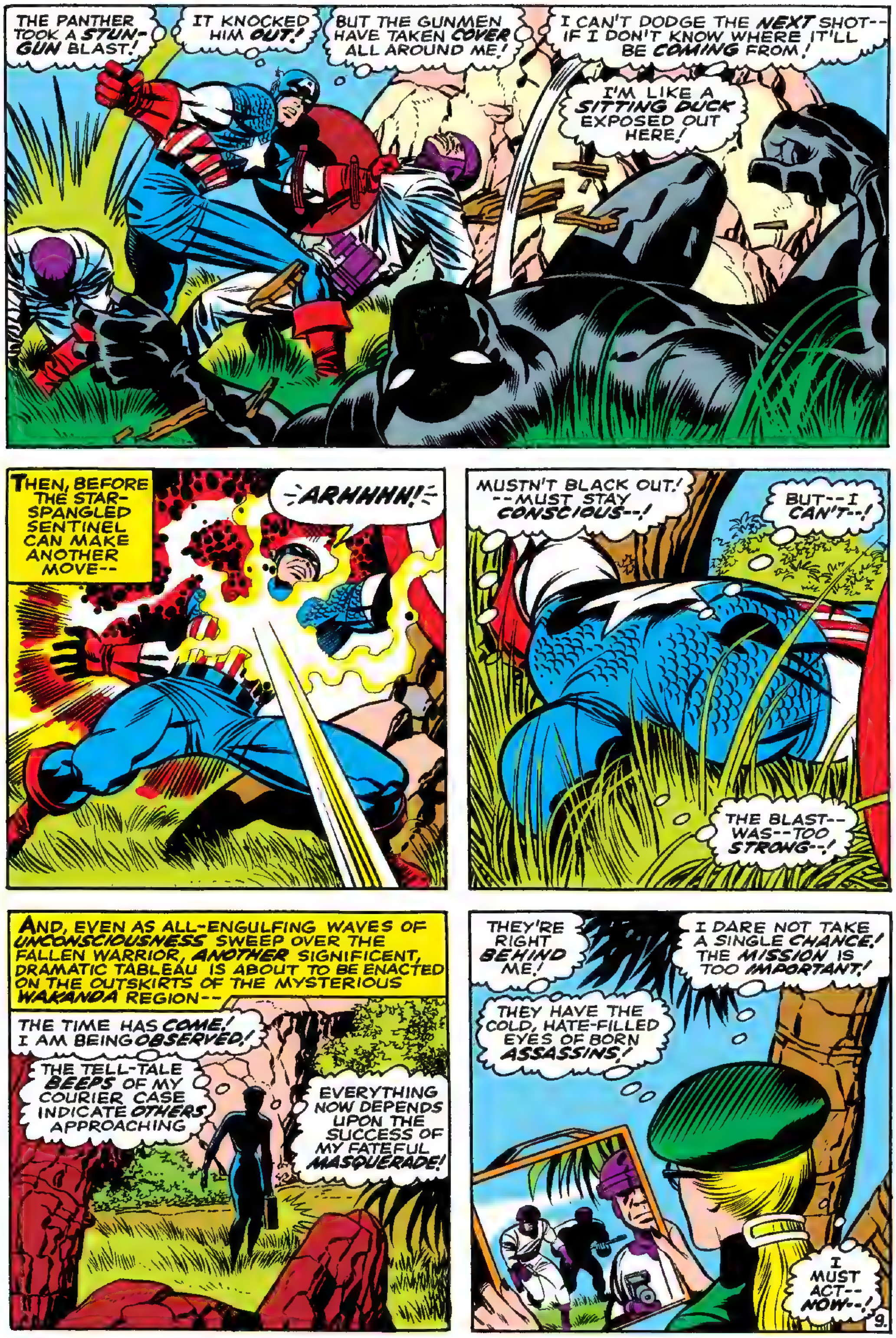
BUT, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, IN A HIDDEN, HEAVILY-FORTIFIED JUNGLE BASE, WE FIND--
HAD THE SOLAR RAY BEEN SCANT INCHES CLOSER, THE ACCURSED CAPTAIN AMERICA WOULD NOW BE DEAD!
BUT INSTEAD--YOU TWO INCOMPETENTS COMPLETELY BUNGLED THE JOB!
AND YOU KNOW THE PENALTY--FOR FAILURE!
WE DID OUR BEST! YOU MUST FORGIVE! JUST--ONE MORE CHANCE--!
WHAT?? YOU DARE PLEAD FOR MERCY--FROM ME??!
NO, EXCELLENCY! WE ARE AWARE HOW TOTALLY MERCILESS YOU ARE!
BUT THINK--THINK HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE YOU TO TEACH OTHERS TO OPERATE THE DEADLY SOLAR-RAY BEAM!
WE--WILL NOT--FAIL--AGAIN!!
YOU MUST ALLOW US TO USE PLAN RED--!
VERY WELL! BUT BOTH YOUR LIVES WILL BE FORFEIT IF CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE BLACK PANTHER ARE NOT SLAIN IN ONE SINGLE STROKE!
THERE MAY STILL BE TIME!
QUICK--CONTACT OUR AGENTS ON THE OUTSIDE--HURRY, MAN!
CALLING TASK FORCE B! ACTIVATE PLAN RED!
AND, DEEP WITHIN THE SPRAWLING VASTNESS OF THE JUNGLE PRIMEVAL--
TASK FORCE B ACKNOWLEDGES ORDER--WILL EXECUTE AT ONCE!
ALL UNITS AT BATTLE READY!
ALL WEAPONS OPERATIONAL!
OVER AND OUT!
BEFORE THIS DAY IS ENDED, CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE BLACK PANTHER WILL FALL!
4

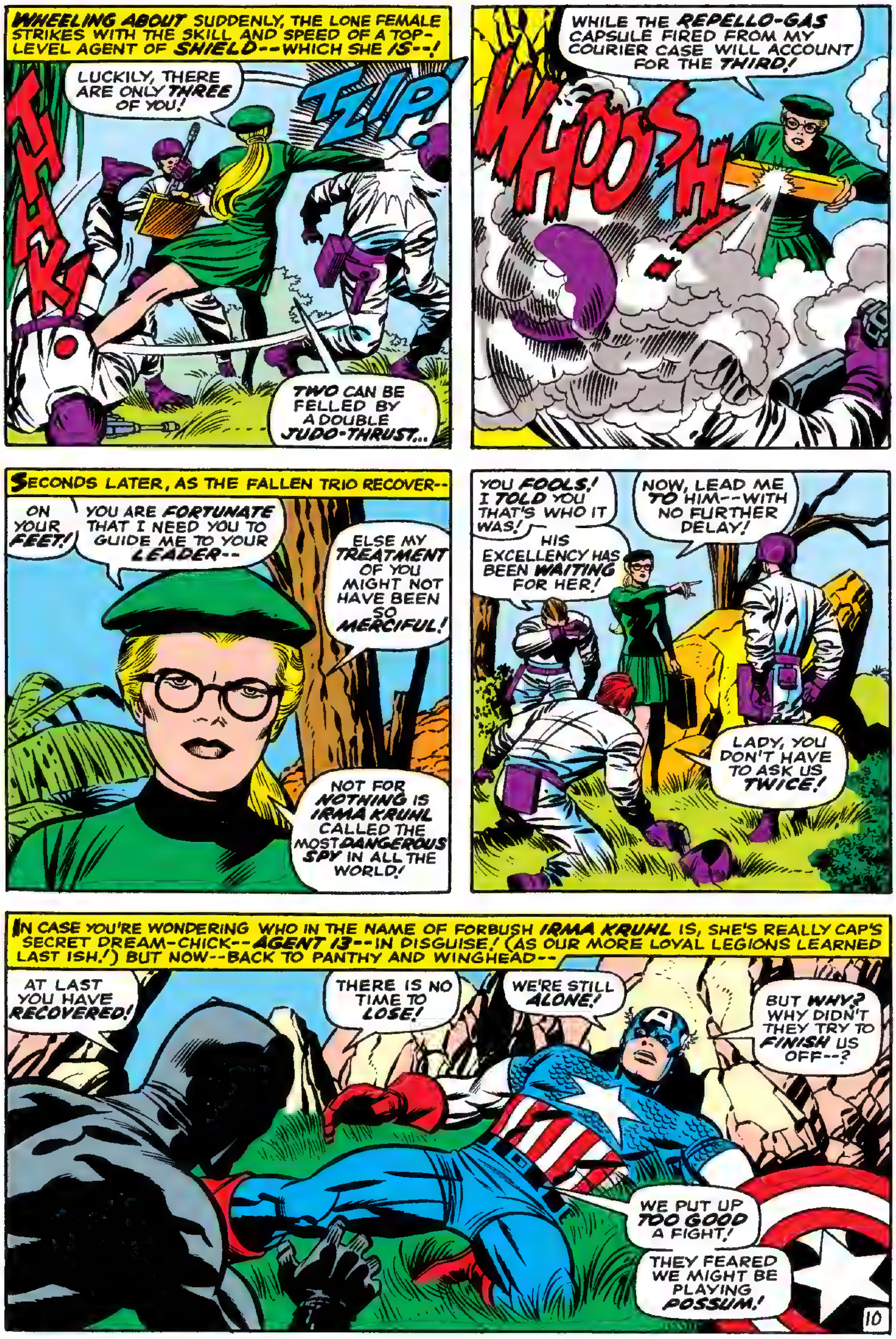

WHILE, BACK AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BLACK PANTHER--
THE SOLAR BOLT WHICH ALMOST STRUCK YOU COMES FROM A SOURCE HIGH IN THE SKY!
YOU CAN SEE IT THERE IN THE REFLECTIVE LENS OF MY TRACKING SCOPE!
BUT WHO PUT IT IN ORBIT THERE??
AND, FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER??
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME!
YOU ARE MOST PERCEPTIVE, MY FRIEND!
BUT, I CANNOT NAME THE ONE WHO IS OUR ENEMY--FOR YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE!
YOU MUST BE PATIENT--
BEFORE VERY LONG, YOU SHALL SEE HIM WITH YOUR OWN EYES!
BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS--
THE AWESOME, MURDEROUS OBJECT ORBITING ABOVE MANKIND IS ACTUALLY A SOLAR HEAT PROJECTOR--
WITH ITS ELECTRONIC JAWS OPEN AND ITS MIRROR CATCHING THE RAYS OF THE SUN--
IT IS A THOUSAND TIMES MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN THE WORLD'S LARGEST H-BOMB!
FOR, HOVERING SILENTLY ABOVE US--PROTECTED BY AN UNSHATTERABLE FIELD OF VIBRATORY FORCE---
IT CAN INSTANTLY WIPE OUT ANY AREA ON EARTH, WITH A SINGLE, WITHERING SOLAR BLAST!
5

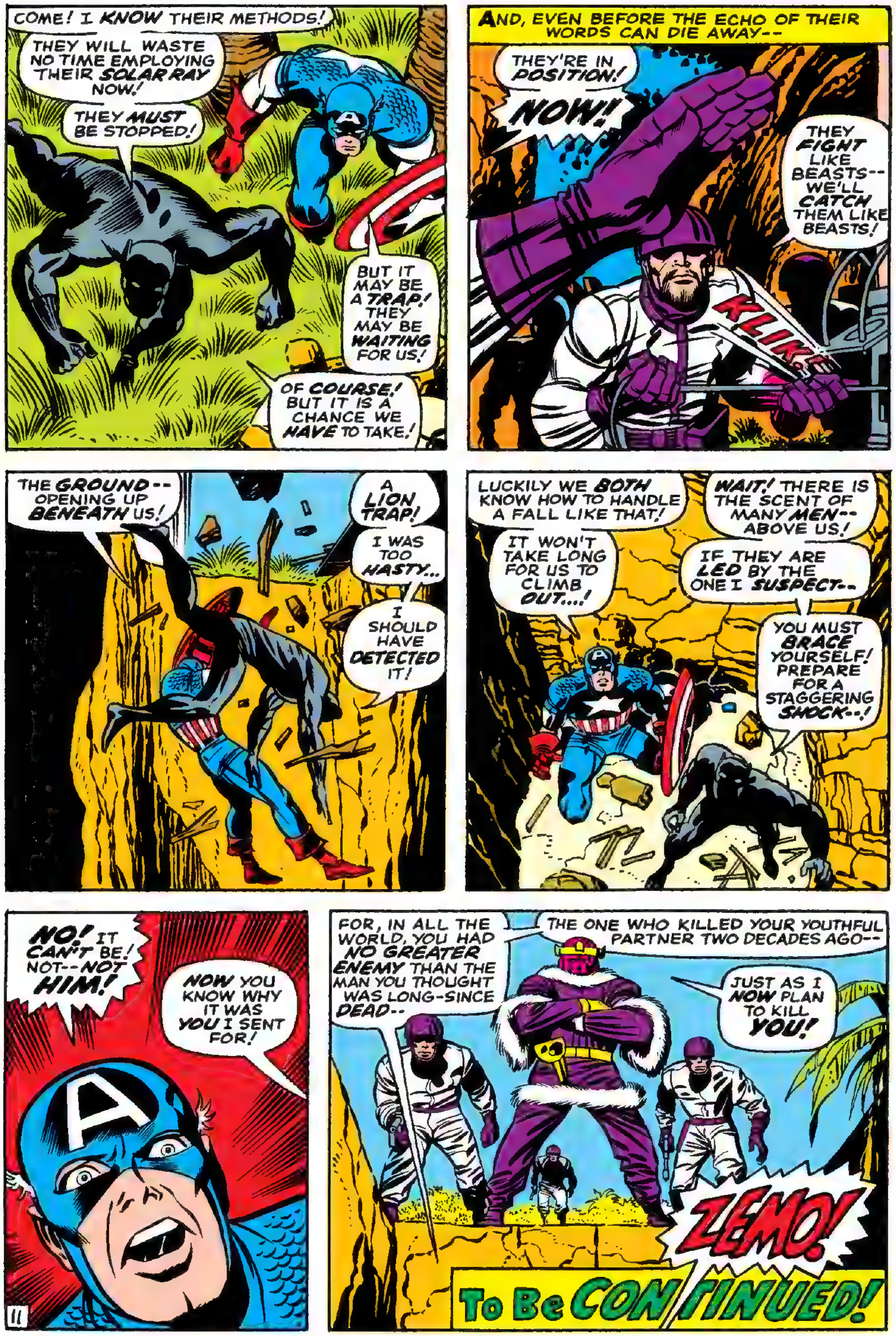
NO CITY--NO NATION--NOT ONE SINGLE HUMAN BEING IS SAFE SO LONG AS THAT FLOATING ABOMINATION REMAINS ABOVE US!
UNTIL NOW, OUR UNSEEN FOES HAVE MERELY BEEN TESTING IT!
BUT I FEAR IT IS, AT LAST, READY TO STRIKE!
WE NEED SPACE SHIPS--ROCKETS!!
HAVE YOU ALERTED SHIELD??
NO! IT WOULD BE IN VAIN!
THERE IS NO WAY TO DESTROY IT BY DIRECT ATTACK!
ITS PROTECTIVE FIELD IS FAR TOO STRONG!
YOU SEE, I POSSESS ROCKETS--AND I HAVE TRIED!
THEN--WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE??
STEALTH--SPEED--AND CUNNING!
THE TWO OF US--STRIKING UNEXPECTEDLY AT ITS CONTROL COMPLEX HERE ON EARTH CAN RENDER IT TOTALLY USELESS!
MY MEN HAVE JUST LOCATED A SMALL FORCE OF THEIR AGENTS!
IF WE CAN MANAGE TO CAPTURE ONE OF THEM--!
I GET THE PICTURE!
LET'S GO!
I WILL TAKE THE LEAD--FOR I KNOW EVERY FOOT OF THIS TERRAIN EVEN AS YOU KNOW YOUR OWN HOME!
MY OWN HOME! HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN--SINCE I'VE HAD A HOME!
AND, HOW MANY YEARS WILL IT BE--BEFORE I CAN CALL ANY PLACE "HOME"--
--BEFORE I TOO CAN FIND A LIFE--AND A LOVE--OF MY OWN?
EVEN NOW--THE ONE GIRL I CAN'T FORGET--IS ON SOME UNKNOWN MISSION--HALF A WORLD AWAY--!
BUT I MUSTN'T THINK OF THAT--
NOT WHILE THE SOLAR RAY MENACES ALL MANKIND!
6

HOLD! WE HAVE REACHED OUR OBJECTIVE!
BUT THE AIR IS TOO STILL-- TOO HEAVY-LADEN WITH UNNATURAL SILENCE!
THE BLACK PANTHER HAS CAUGHT THE SCENT OF THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS PREDATORY BEAST--
THE SCENT OF-- MAN!
HE SUSPECTS OUR PRESENCE!
FIRE-- BEFORE THEY CAN ESCAPE!
YOU WERE RIGHT!
MOVE IT!
TAKE COVER!
UNIFORMED TROOPS OF SOME SORT--
ARMED WITH ROCKET RIFLES!
YOU WERE TOO HASTY--
YOUR FIRST SHOT MISSED!
AND THERE WON'T BE A SECOND CHANCE!
THEY'RE NOT NATIVES!
THEY'RE FOREIGN MERCENARIES-- BUT LED BY WHOM??
BEHIND YOU-- OTHERS ATTACKING! LOOK OUT!
7

THANKS, PANTHER!
I READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR!
HOW ARE YOU DOING, PARTNER?
I'M MANAGING TO KEEP OCCUPIED!
BUT WE MUST TAKE A PRISONER!
SOMEONE WE CAN INTERROGATE!
THEY ARE TOO POWERFUL! IF THE BATTLE CONTINUES--WE WILL BE SMASHED!
AT THIS RANGE, I CANNOT MISS--!
PUT THEM OUT OF ACTION WITH A LOW VOLTAGE STUN-BOLT SHOT!
CLICK!
SHOOP!
UNHH!
8


THE PANTHER TOOK A STUN-GUN BLAST!
IT KNOCKED HIM OUT!
BUT THE GUNMEN HAVE TAKEN COVER ALL AROUND ME!
I CAN'T DODGE THE NEXT SHOT-- IF I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'LL BE COMING FROM!
I'M LIKE A SITTING DUCK EXPOSED OUT HERE!
THEN, BEFORE THE STAR-SPANGLED SENTINEL CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE--
ARHHHH!
MUSTN'T BLACK OUT! --MUST STAY CONSCIOUS--!
BUT--I CAN'T--!
THE BLAST--WAS--TOO STRONG--!
AND, EVEN AS ALL-ENGULFING WAVES OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS SWEEP OVER THE FALLEN WARRIOR, ANOTHER SIGNIFICENT, DRAMATIC TABLEAU IS ABOUT TO BE ENACTED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MYSTERIOUS WAKANDA REGION--
THE TIME HAS COME! I AM BEING OBSERVED!
THE TELL-TALE BEEPS OF MY COURIER CASE INDICATE OTHERS APPROACHING
EVERYTHING NOW DEPENDS UPON THE SUCCESS OF MY FATEFUL MASQUERADE!
THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND ME!
I DARE NOT TAKE A SINGLE CHANCE! THE MISSION IS TOO IMPORTANT!
THEY HAVE THE COLD, HATE-FILLED EYES OF BORN ASSASSINS!
I MUST ACT-- NOW--!
9.


WHEELING ABOUT SUDDENLY, THE LONE FEMALE STRIKES WITH THE SKILL AND SPEED OF A TOP-LEVEL AGENT OF SHIELD--WHICH SHE IS--!
LUCKILY, THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF YOU!
THAK!
TZIP!
TWO CAN BE FELLED BY A DOUBLE JUDO-THRUST...
WHILE THE REPELLO-GAS CAPSULE FIRED FROM MY COURIER CASE WILL ACCOUNT FOR THE THIRD!
WHOOSH!
SECONDS LATER, AS THE FALLEN TRIO RECOVER--
ON YOUR FEET!
YOU ARE FORTUNATE THAT I NEED YOU TO GUIDE ME TO YOUR LEADER--
ELSE MY TREATMENT OF YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN SO MERCIFUL!
NOT FOR NOTHING IS IRMA KRUHL CALLED THE MOST DANGEROUS SPY IN ALL THE WORLD!
YOU FOOLS! I TOLD YOU THAT'S WHO IT WAS!
HIS EXCELLENCY HAS BEEN WAITING FOR HER!
NOW, LEAD ME TO HIM--WITH NO FURTHER DELAY!
LADY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ASK US TWICE!
IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHO IN THE NAME OF FORBUSH IRMA KRUHL IS, SHE'S REALLY CAP'S SECRET DREAM-CHICK--AGENT 13--IN DISGUISE! (AS OUR MORE LOYAL LEGIONS LEARNED LAST ISH!) BUT NOW--BACK TO PANTHY AND WINGHEAD--
AT LAST YOU HAVE RECOVERED!
THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE!
WE'RE STILL ALONE!
BUT WHY? WHY DIDN'T THEY TRY TO FINISH US OFF--?
WE PUT UP TOO GOOD A FIGHT!
THEY FEARED WE MIGHT BE PLAYING POSSUM!
10



COME! I KNOW THEIR METHODS!
THEY WILL WASTE NO TIME EMPLOYING THEIR SOLAR RAY NOW!
THEY MUST BE STOPPED!
BUT IT MAY BE A TRAP! THEY MAY BE WAITING FOR US!
OF COURSE! BUT IT IS A CHANCE WE HAVE TO TAKE!
AND, EVEN BEFORE THE ECHO OF THEIR WORDS CAN DIE AWAY--
THEY'RE IN POSITION!
NOW!!
THEY FIGHT LIKE BEASTS--WE'LL CATCH THEM LIKE BEASTS!
KLIK
THE GROUND--OPENING UP BENEATH US!
A LION TRAP!
I WAS TOO HASTY...
I SHOULD HAVE DETECTED IT!
LUCKILY WE BOTH KNOW HOW TO HANDLE A FALL LIKE THAT!
IT WON'T TAKE LONG FOR US TO CLIMB OUT...!
WAIT! THERE IS THE SCENT OF MANY MEN--ABOVE US!
IF THEY ARE LED BY THE ONE I SUSPECT--
YOU MUST BRACE YOURSELF! PREPARE FOR A STAGGERING SHOCK--!
NO! IT CAN'T BE! NOT--NOT HIM!
NOW YOU KNOW WHY IT WAS YOU I SENT FOR!
11
FOR, IN ALL THE WORLD, YOU HAD NO GREATER ENEMY THAN THE MAN YOU THOUGHT WAS LONG-SINCE DEAD--
THE ONE WHO KILLED YOUR YOUTHFUL PARTNER TWO DECADES AGO--
JUST AS I NOW PLAN TO KILL YOU!
ZEMO!
To Be CONTINUED!

TALES OF SUSPENSE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IRON MAN
and
CAPTAIN AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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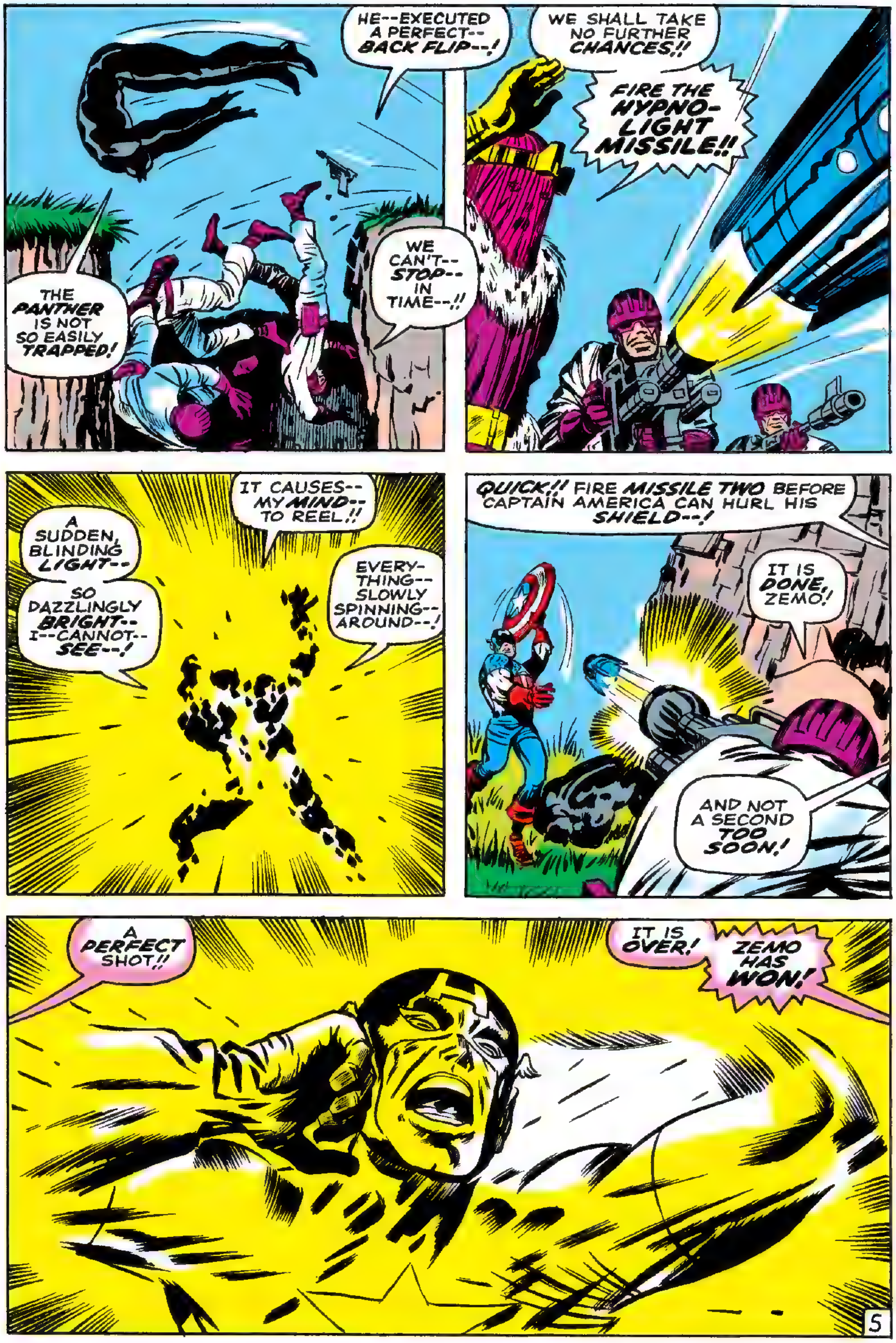
MCG
"AT THE MERCY OF THE MAGGIA!"

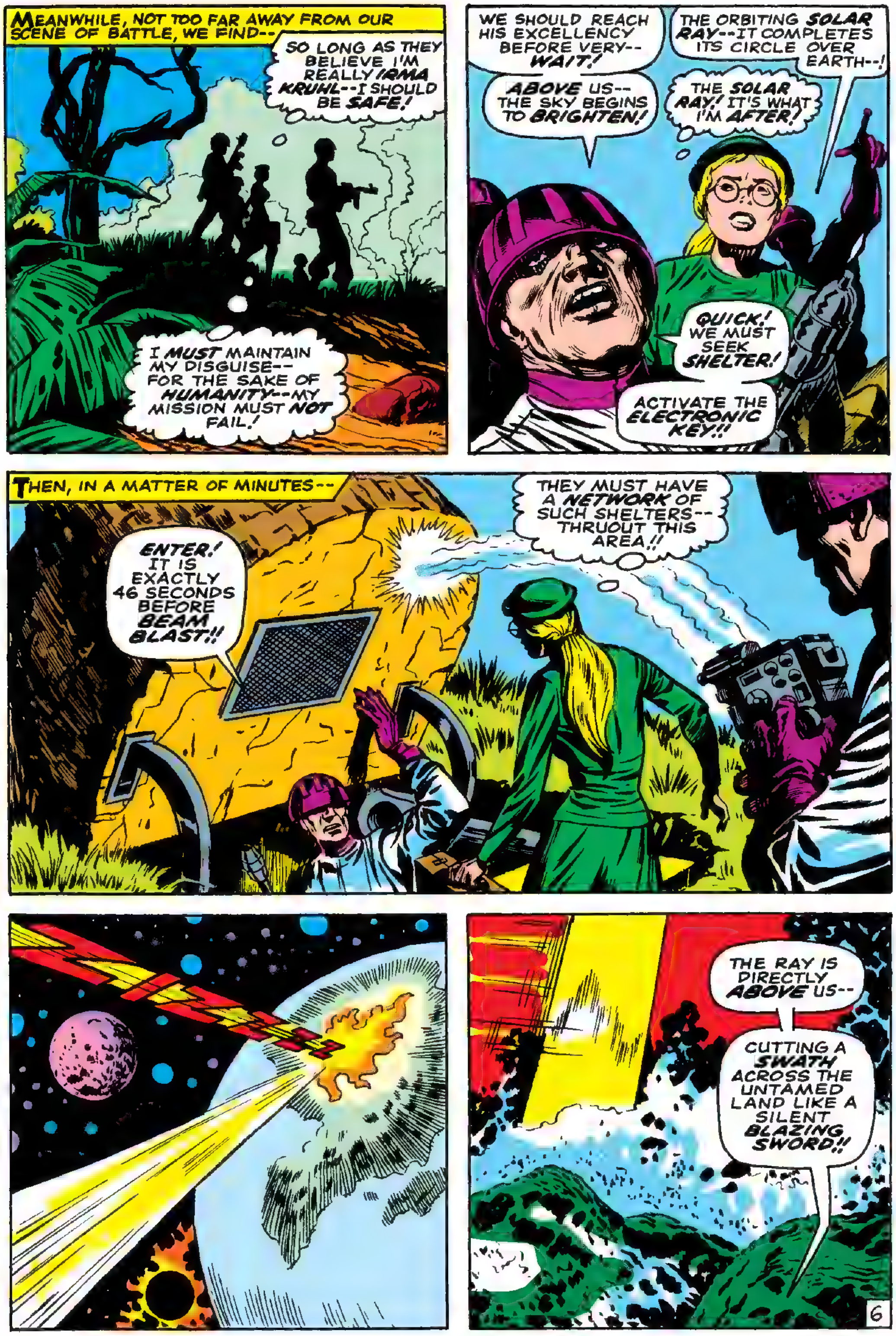
CAPTAIN AMERICA, LIVING LEGEND of WORLD WAR II™
"THE MAN WHO LIVED TWICE!"
IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T REALLY BE ZEMO WHO HAS CAPTURED US!
WITH MY OWN EYES --I SAW HIM DIE-- BENEATH THAT ROCKSLIDE, MANY MONTHS AGO!*
*AND YOU SAW IT TOO, TIGER--IF YOU WERE READING AVENGERS #15 AS YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN! --SOLICITOUS STAN.
ANSWERING AN URGENT CALL FROM THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK PANTHER, CAP SPEEDS TO DARKEST AFRICA, ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF--AND HIS WARRIOR CHIEFTAIN ALLY--CAPTURED-- BY A MAN WHO SHOULD BE DEAD--!
WE MUST ESCAPE!
ZEMO'S ORBITING DEATH RAY MUST NEVER BE UNLEASHED UPON THE EARTH BELOW!
STAN (THE MAN) LEE AND JACK (KING) KIRBY CREATED IT!
SYD SHORES AND ARTIE SIMEK INKED AND LETTERED IT!
WHAT MORE CAN A TRUE MARVELITE ASK?
1.

I SEE DOUBT IN YOUR EYES, AVENGER!
BUT, IT IS UNCALLED-FOR!
ZEMO TRULY LIVES!
WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA--AND THE BLACK PANTHER OUT OF ACTION--
NONE WILL BE LEFT TO OPPOSE US!
ZEMO WAS RIGHT!
HE SAID THE VERY SIGHT OF HIM WOULD SHOCK THE SHIELD-CARRYING AMERICAN INTO TOTAL HELPLESSNESS!
DON'T MAKE A MOVE, PANTHER!
NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL YOU MAY BE--EVEN YOU ARE NOT--BULLET-PROOF!
ONCE BEFORE I POSSESSED A FANTASTIC MASTER PLAN--
A PLAN FOR PERMANENT AND COMPLETE WORLD CONQUEST!
YOU FOILED ME THEN--YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD CRUSHED ME!
BUT ZEMO SURVIVED!
ALL THESE MONTHS I PLANNED--AND PLOTTED--
AND NOW--MY TIME OF TRIUMPH HAS COME AGAIN! NOW, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL DIE!
DEATH HAS NO TERRORS FOR ONE WHO HAS FACED IT AS OFTEN AS I!
BUT, I WON'T DIE IN VAIN--NOT WHILE YOU REMAIN ALIVE!
ALAS, YOU MASKED FOOL--
THE CHOICE IS NOT YOURS!
2

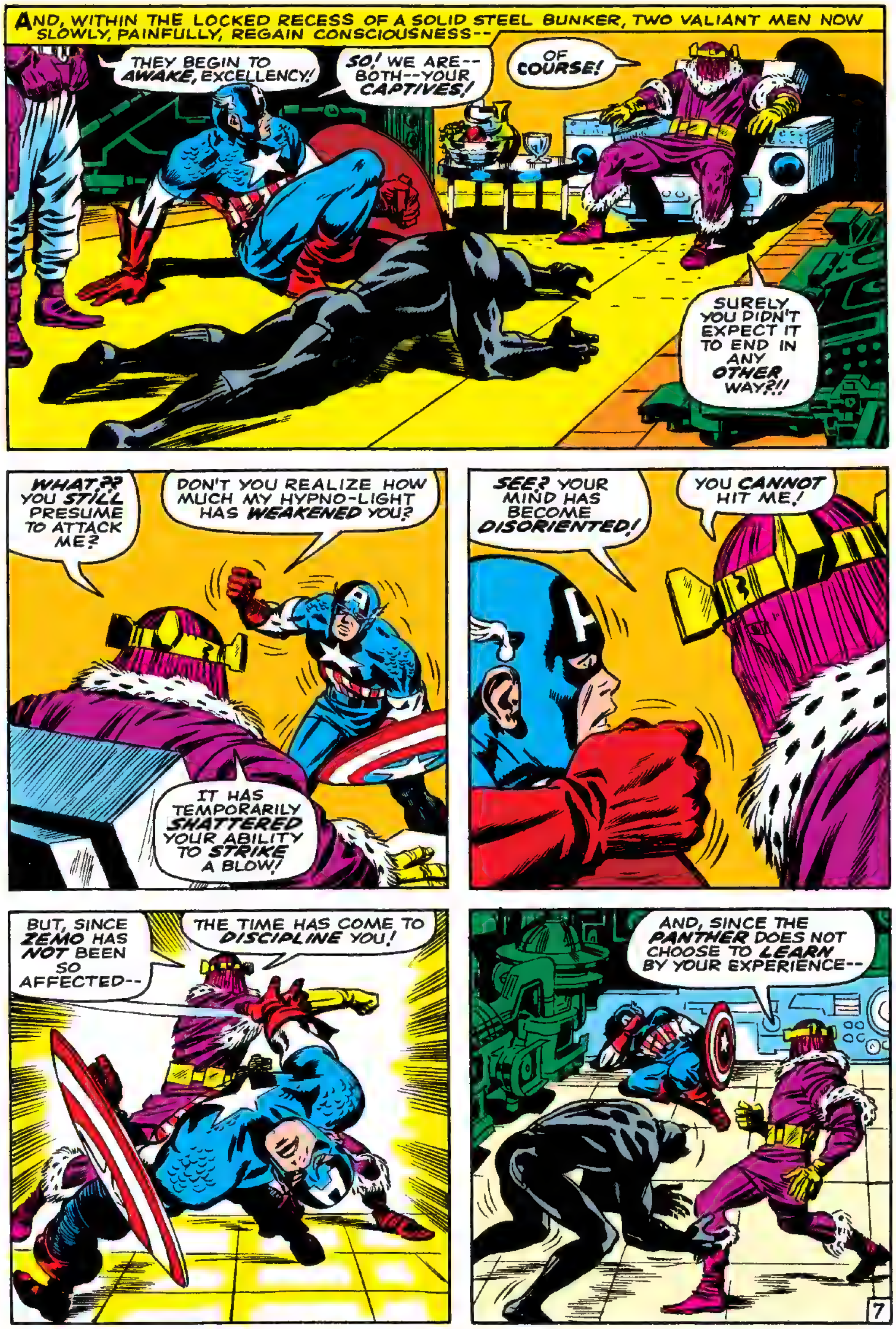
FTOK!
NOT SO!
THE CHOICE BELONGS TO ANY MAN--
--WHO HAS THE COURAGE TO FIGHT ON--WHILE A SINGLE BREATH REMAINS!
IT WAS YOU WHO KILLED MY PARTNER, BUCKY--
YOU WHO RIVALLED THE RED SKULL AS THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST NAZI!
NO MATTER HOW MANY MEN YOU HURL AGAINST ME--
I'LL GET YOU, ZEMO!
SO! YOU ARE STILL MIS-GUIDED ENOUGH TO THINK THAT RAW COURAGE CAN EVER DEFEAT SUPERIOR POWER!
GO, MY WARRIORS! SHOW HIM THE FATAL ERROR OF HIS WAYS!
PTHOOM!
IT'S BEEN TRIED BEFORE, YOU MASKED JACKAL!
PERHAPS IT HAS!
BUT NOW, NOT EVEN YOU CAN OVERCOME THE GRIM FINALITY OF A SINGLE BULLET!
3

DON'T BET ON IT, ZEMO!
I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME GETTING OUT OF TRAPS--LIKE THIS--!
LOOK OUT, YOU BUNGLERS!
THE PANTHER HAS ALSO BROKEN FREE! STOP HIM! STOP HIM!
WE CANNOT FIRE--NOT WITHOUT HITTING OUR OWN MEN!
AND EVEN IF WE COULD--
HE DODGES AND SPINS MORE LIKE A BEAST THAN SOMEONE HUMAN!
MEN! GIVE US MORE MEN!
HE BATTLES LIKE A WHOLE REGIMENT-- --UNHHH!
DON'T STOP!! WE HAVE HIM--!!
AND NOW--WE WILL SEE HOW THE PANTHER FALLS!
HE CAN RETREAT NO FURTHER--
BEHIND HIM IS THE YAWNING PIT!
4


HE--EXECUTED A PERFECT-- BACK FLIP--!
THE PANTHER IS NOT SO EASILY TRAPPED!
WE CAN'T-- STOP-- IN TIME--!!
WE SHALL TAKE NO FURTHER CHANCES!!
FIRE THE HYPNO-LIGHT MISSILE!!
A SUDDEN, BLINDING LIGHT--
SO DAZZLINGLY BRIGHT-- I--CANNOT-- SEE--!
IT CAUSES-- MY MIND-- TO REEL!!
EVERY-THING-- SLOWLY SPINNING-- AROUND--!
QUICK!! FIRE MISSILE TWO BEFORE CAPTAIN AMERICA CAN HURL HIS SHIELD--!
IT IS DONE, ZEMO!
AND NOT A SECOND TOO SOON!
A PERFECT SHOT!!
IT IS OVER!
ZEMO HAS WON!
5



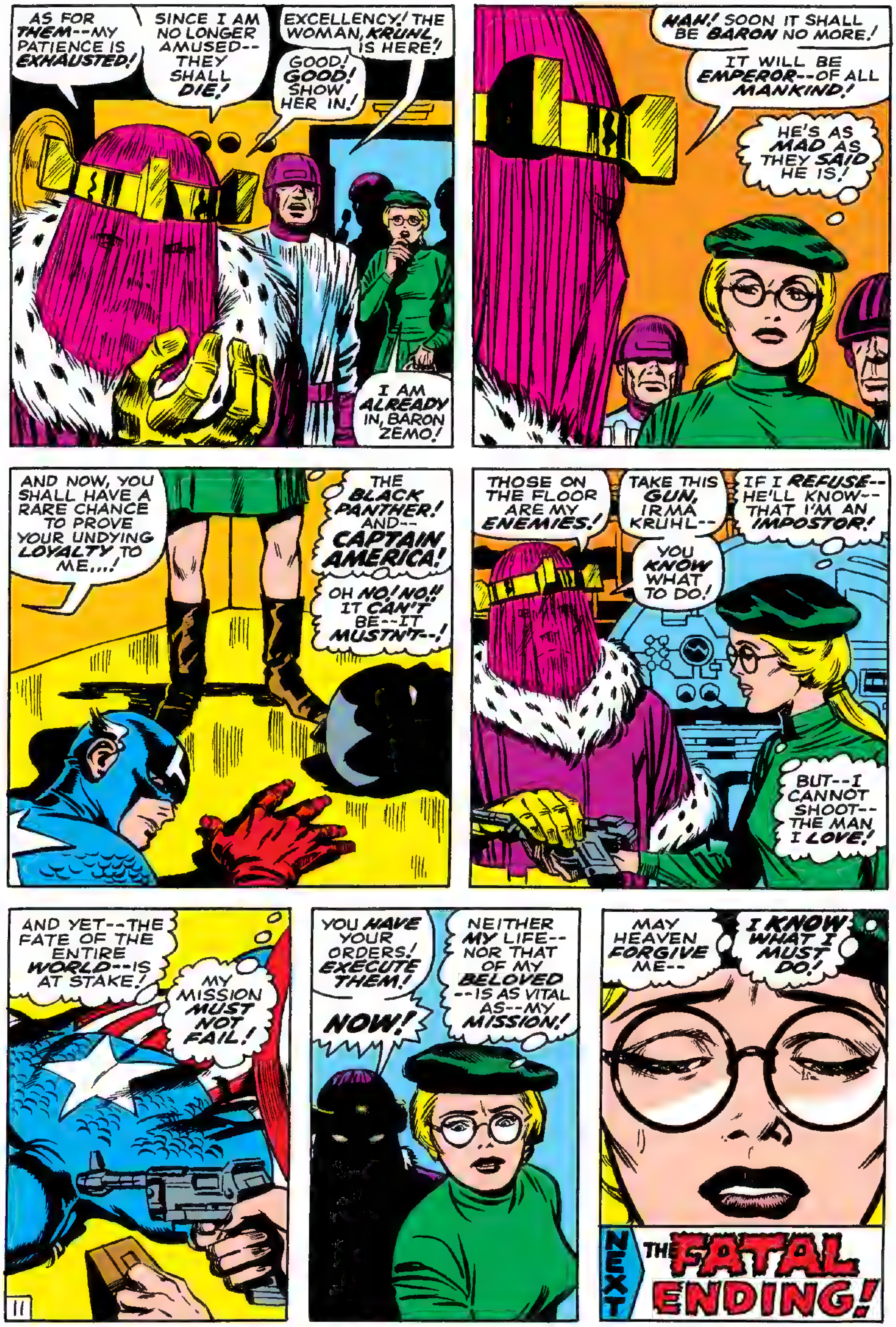
MEANWHILE, NOT TOO FAR AWAY FROM OUR SCENE OF BATTLE, WE FIND--
SO LONG AS THEY BELIEVE I'M REALLY IRMA KRUHL--I SHOULD BE SAFE!
I MUST MAINTAIN MY DISGUISE--FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY--MY MISSION MUST NOT FAIL!
WE SHOULD REACH HIS EXCELLENCY BEFORE VERY--WAIT!
ABOVE US--THE SKY BEGINS TO BRIGHTEN!
THE ORBITING SOLAR RAY--IT COMPLETES ITS CIRCLE OVER EARTH--!
THE SOLAR RAY! IT'S WHAT I'M AFTER!
QUICK! WE MUST SEEK SHELTER!
ACTIVATE THE ELECTRONIC KEY!!
THEN, IN A MATTER OF MINUTES--
ENTER! IT IS EXACTLY 46 SECONDS BEFORE BEAM BLAST!!
THEY MUST HAVE A NETWORK OF SUCH SHELTERS--THRUOUT THIS AREA!!
THE RAY IS DIRECTLY ABOVE US--
CUTTING A SWATH ACROSS THE UNTAMED LAND LIKE A SILENT BLAZING SWORD!!
6


AND, WITHIN THE LOCKED RECESS OF A SOLID STEEL BUNKER, TWO VALIANT MEN NOW SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS--
THEY BEGIN TO AWAKE, EXCELLENCY!
SO! WE ARE-- BOTH--YOUR CAPTIVES!
OF COURSE!
SURELY YOU DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO END IN ANY OTHER WAY?!!
WHAT?? YOU STILL PRESUME TO ATTACK ME?
DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH MY HYPNO-LIGHT HAS WEAKENED YOU?
IT HAS TEMPORARILY SHATTERED YOUR ABILITY TO STRIKE A BLOW!
SEE? YOUR MIND HAS BECOME DISORIENTED!
YOU CANNOT HIT ME!
BUT, SINCE ZEMO HAS NOT BEEN SO AFFECTED--
THE TIME HAS COME TO DISCIPLINE YOU!
AND, SINCE THE PANTHER DOES NOT CHOOSE TO LEARN BY YOUR EXPERIENCE--
7

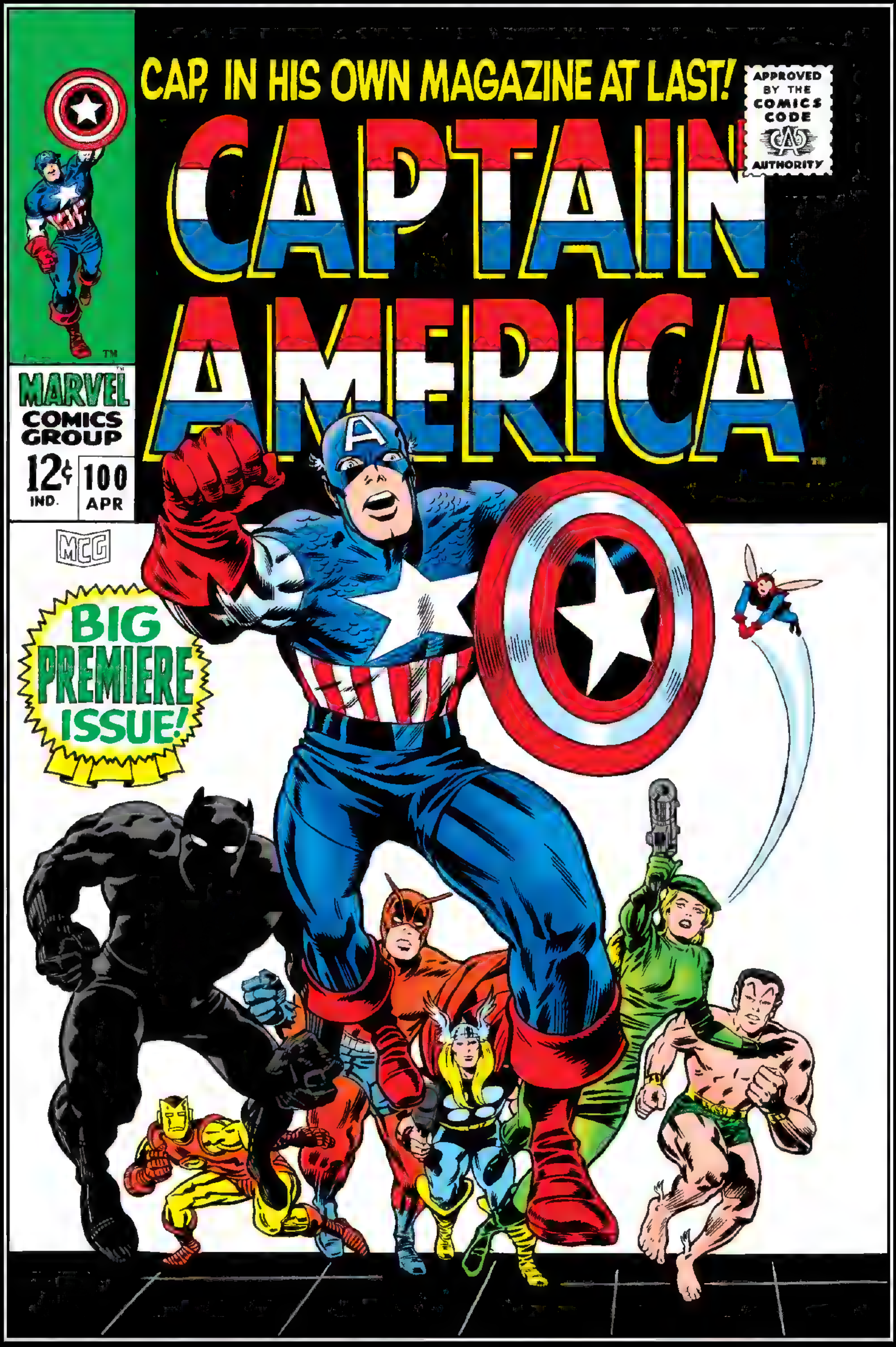
HE TOO SHALL BE ACCORDED THE SELFSAME TREATMENT!
AGAIN YOU BOTH TRY TO RISE?!!
YOUR COURAGE FAR EXCEEDS YOUR WISDOM!
INDEED, I SHALL HAVE USE FOR HIRELINGS SUCH AS YOU!
HIRELING?!! YOU ARE ADDRESSING A KING--THE CHIEFTAIN OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!!
EASY, PARTNER! LET'S BOTH HEAR HIM OUT!
WE HAVE TO STALL--WHILE THE HYPNO-LIGHT WEARS OFF!
WHAT'S CHANGED YOU, ZEMO?
YOU SEEM COLDER--EVEN MORE DIABOLICAL THAN EVER BEFORE!
THAT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE!
BUT, WHAT I AM NOW ABOUT TO SHOW YOU--IS--!
8

THE MOST POTENT WEAPON EVER DEVISED--!
MY ORBITING DEATH RAY!
UTILIZING THE LIMITLESS ENERGY OF THE SUN ITSELF--
IT BECOMES A GIGANTIC, DEADLY LASER BEAM--
WHICH WILL MAKE ME MASTER OF ALL MANKIND!
SHOULD ANY NATION DARE DEFY ME--
I CAN OBLITERATE IT--IN A MATTER OF SECONDS!
NOT EVEN MISSILES CAN DESTROY MY BEAM--
FOR IT CAN DISINTEGRATE THEM THE INSTANT THEY'RE LAUNCHED!
AND NOW--AS SOON AS MY AGENT, IRMA KRUHL, BRINGS ME A STOLEN LIST OF U.S. NUCLEAR BASE TARGETS--
I WILL WIPE OUT THE UNITED STATES!
MISS KRUHL HAS BEEN SIGHTED!
SHE WILL ARRIVE WITHIN MINUTES, EXCELLENCY!
THAT LEAVES US NO CHOICE, AVENGER--!
RIGHT! EVEN THOUGH WE'RE STILL GROGGY--
WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
BETTER TO DIE AS MEN--
THAN TO LIVE--AS SLAVES!
9

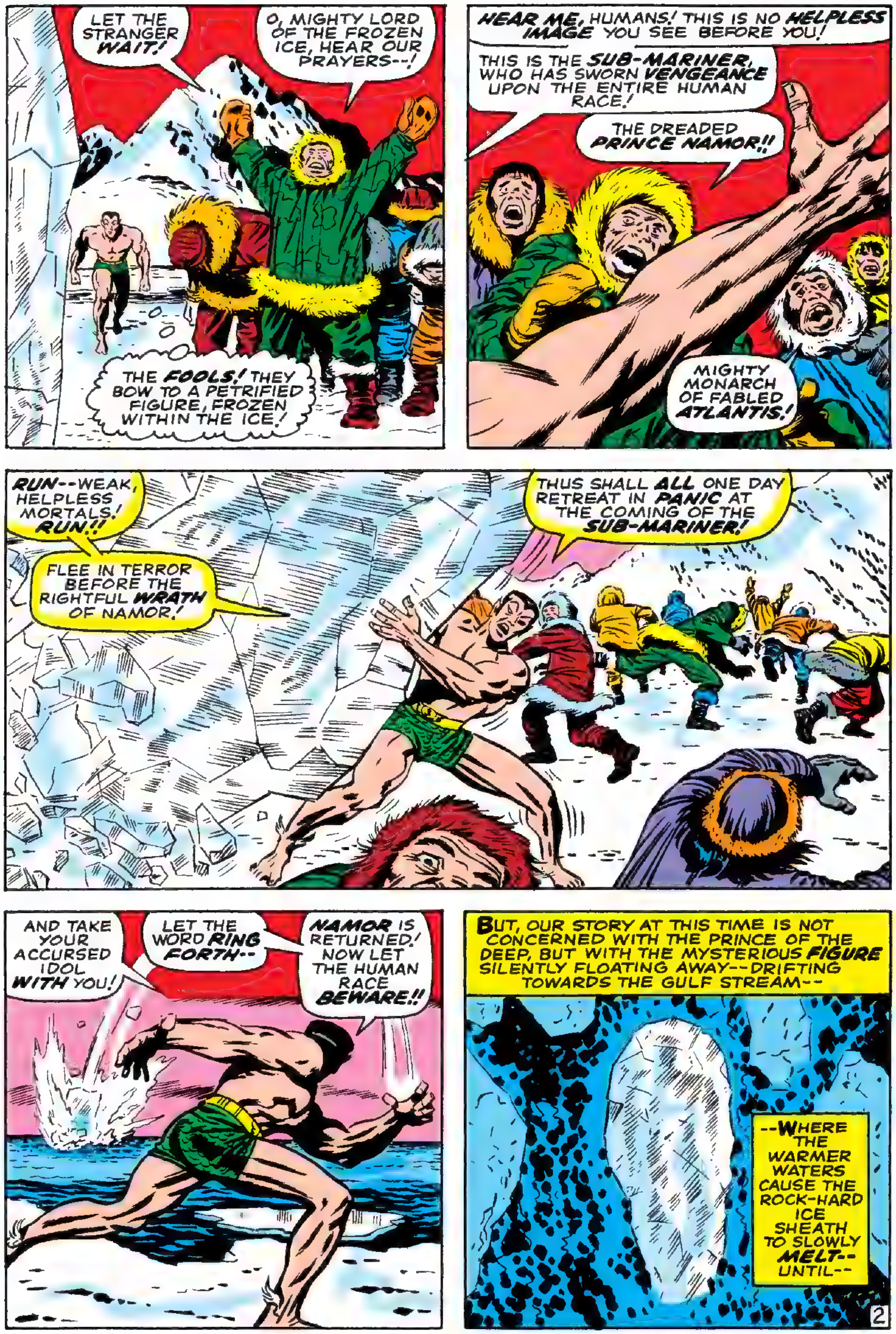
WELL-SPOKEN, DOOMED ONES!
A PITY YOUR POWER CANNOT MATCH YOUR HOPELESS RESOLVE!
EVEN IF MY HYPNO-LIGHT HAD NOT WEAKENED YOU--YOU'RE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED!
HOLD HIM! HOLD HIM!
WE NEED EVERY MAN! THEY BATTLE LIKE DEMONS!
INCREDIBLE! THEY KEEP COMING CLOSER TO ME--!
YOUR WEAPONS! QUICKLY, YOU FOOLS--USE YOUR WEAPONS AGAINST THEM!
AT THIS SHORT RANGE, THE PARALYZER PISTOL WILL STOP THEM COLD!
AND THIS TIME WE'LL LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE!
ONCE AGAIN ZEMO IS THE VICTOR!
10

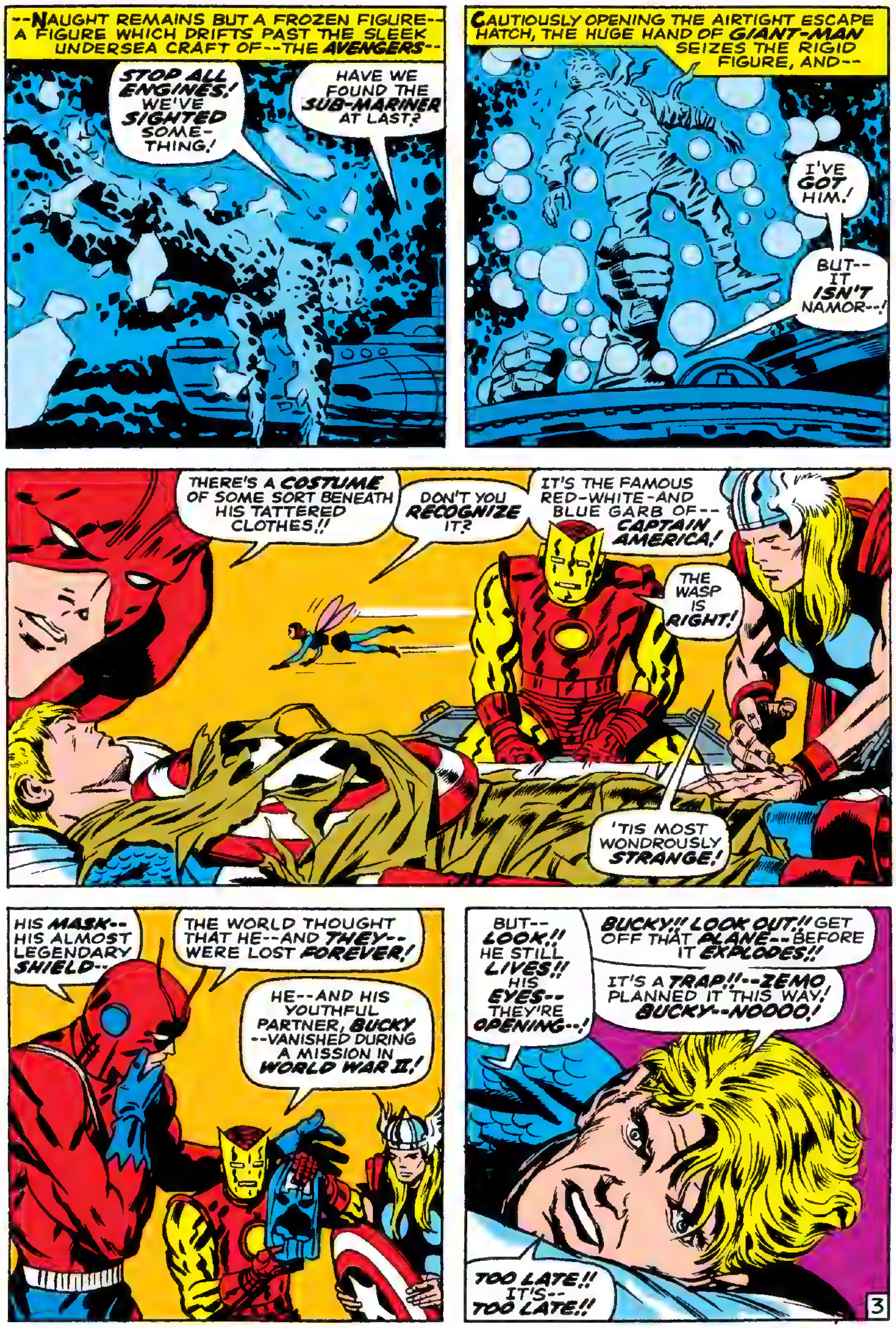


AS FOR THEM--MY PATIENCE IS EXHAUSTED!
SINCE I AM NO LONGER AMUSED--THEY SHALL DIE!
EXCELLENCY! THE WOMAN, KRUHL, IS HERE!
GOOD! GOOD! SHOW HER IN!
I AM ALREADY IN, BARON ZEMO!
HAH! SOON IT SHALL BE BARON NO MORE!
IT WILL BE EMPEROR--OF ALL MANKIND!
HE'S AS MAD AS THEY SAID HE IS!
AND NOW, YOU SHALL HAVE A RARE CHANCE TO PROVE YOUR UNDYING LOYALTY TO ME...!
THE BLACK PANTHER! AND--CAPTAIN AMERICA!
OH NO! NO!! IT CAN'T BE--IT MUSTN'T--!
THOSE ON THE FLOOR ARE MY ENEMIES!
TAKE THIS GUN, IRMA KRUHL--
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!
IF I REFUSE--HE'LL KNOW--THAT I'M AN IMPOSTOR!
BUT--I CANNOT SHOOT--THE MAN I LOVE!
AND YET--THE FATE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD--IS AT STAKE!
MY MISSION MUST NOT FAIL!
11
YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS! EXECUTE THEM!
NOW!
NEITHER MY LIFE--NOR THAT OF MY BELOVED--IS AS VITAL AS--MY MISSION!
MAY HEAVEN FORGIVE ME--
I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO!
NEXT
THE FATAL ENDING!

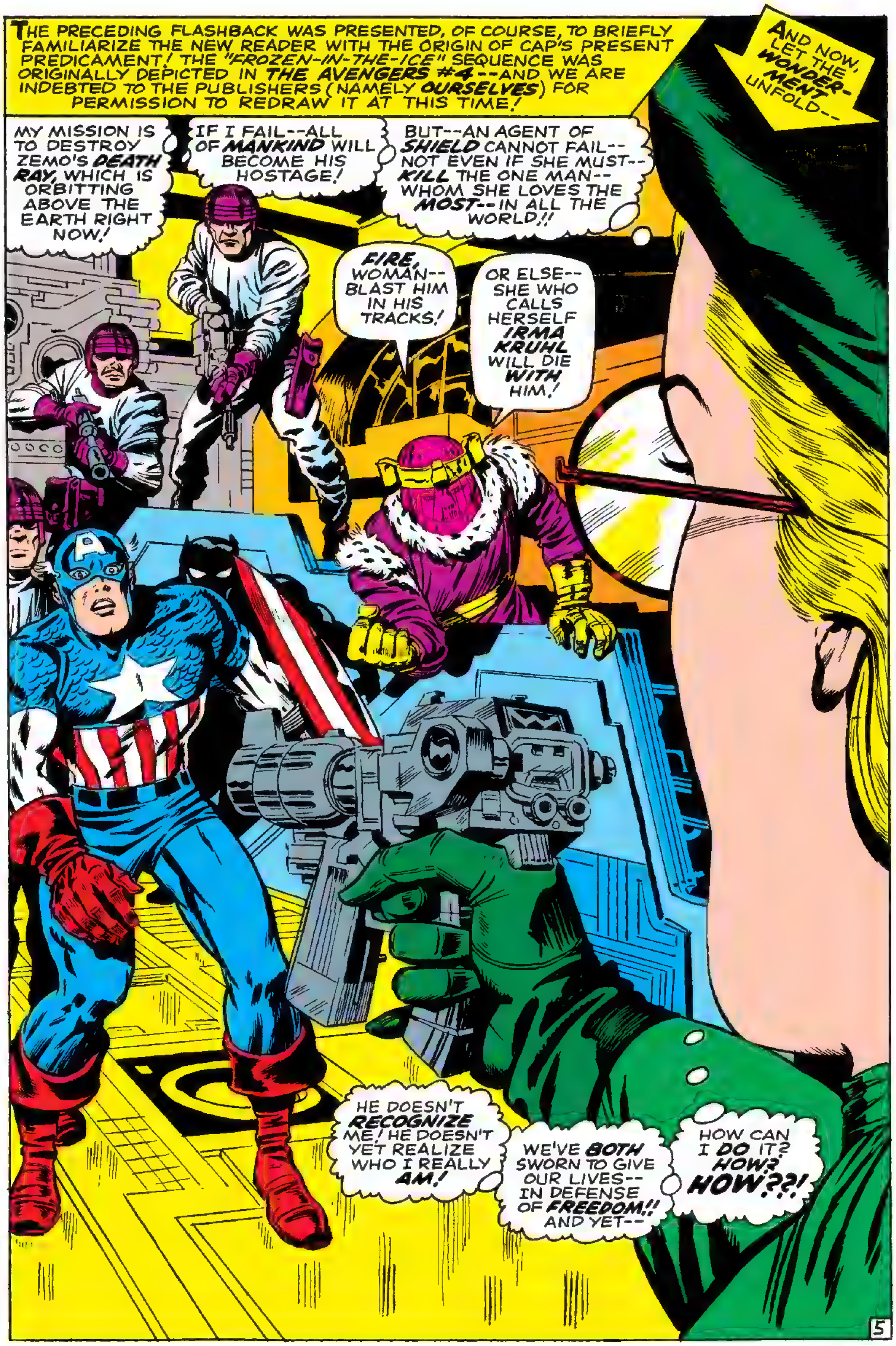

CAP, IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE AT LAST!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CAPTAIN AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
100 APR
MCG
BIG PREMIERE ISSUE!

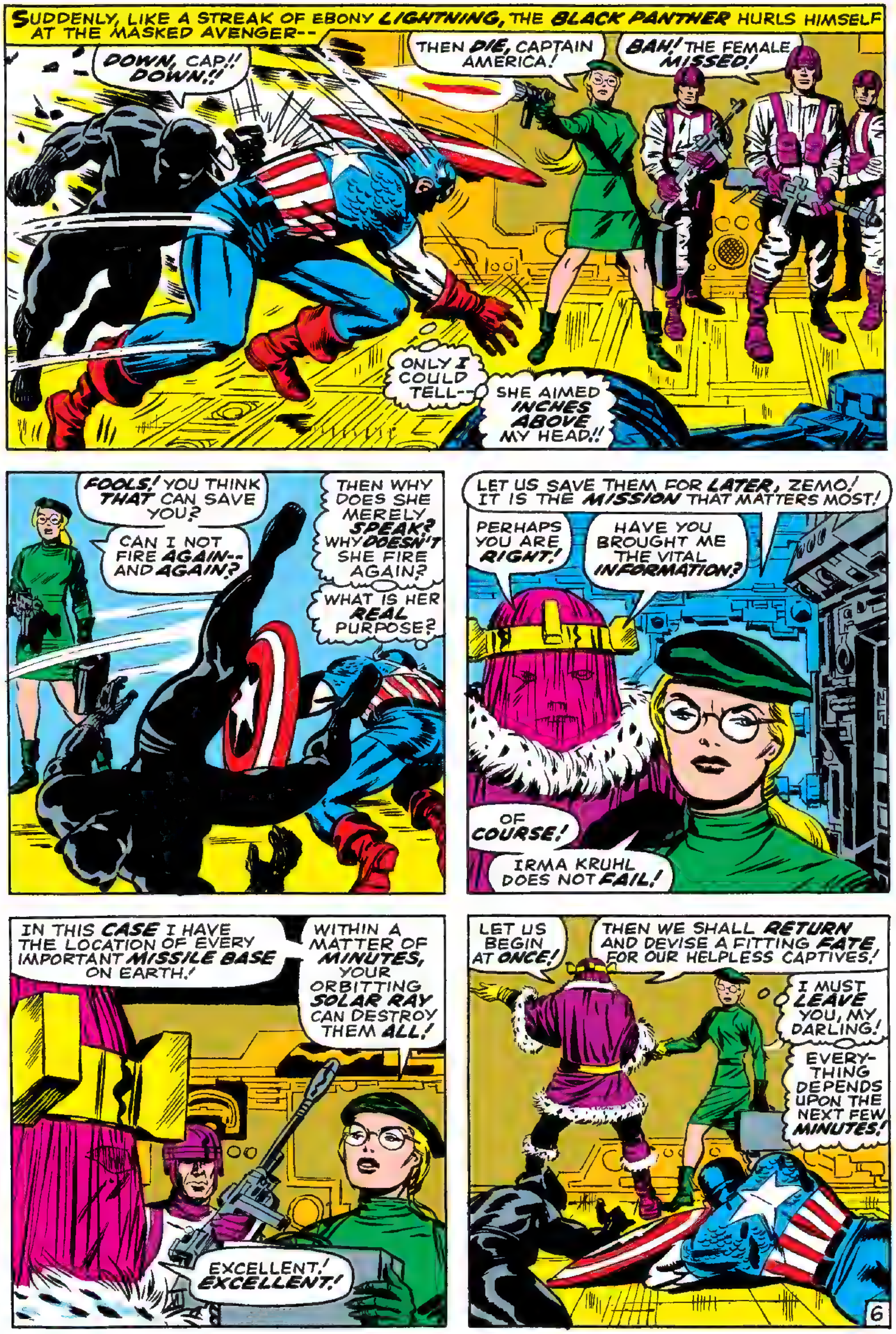
CAPTAIN AMERICA, LIVING LEGEND of WORLD WAR II ™
"THIS MONSTER UNMASKED!"
FROZEN IN A GIANT SLAB OF ICE STANDS THE FIGURE OF A MAN-- A MAN UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD! A MAN FOR THE AGES--A LIVING LEGEND--
WORSHIPPED AS A DEMIGOD BY THE NORTHERN TRIBE WHO FOUND HIM, HE HAS EXISTED THUS FOR TWO DECADES... UNTIL, AT LAST--
BEHOLD! A MIGHTY STRANGER COMES!
PEERLESSLY PRODUCED and PROUDLY PRESENTED BY:
STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY
EMBELLISHED BY: SYD SHORES
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
TREASURED BY: IRV FORBUSH
1

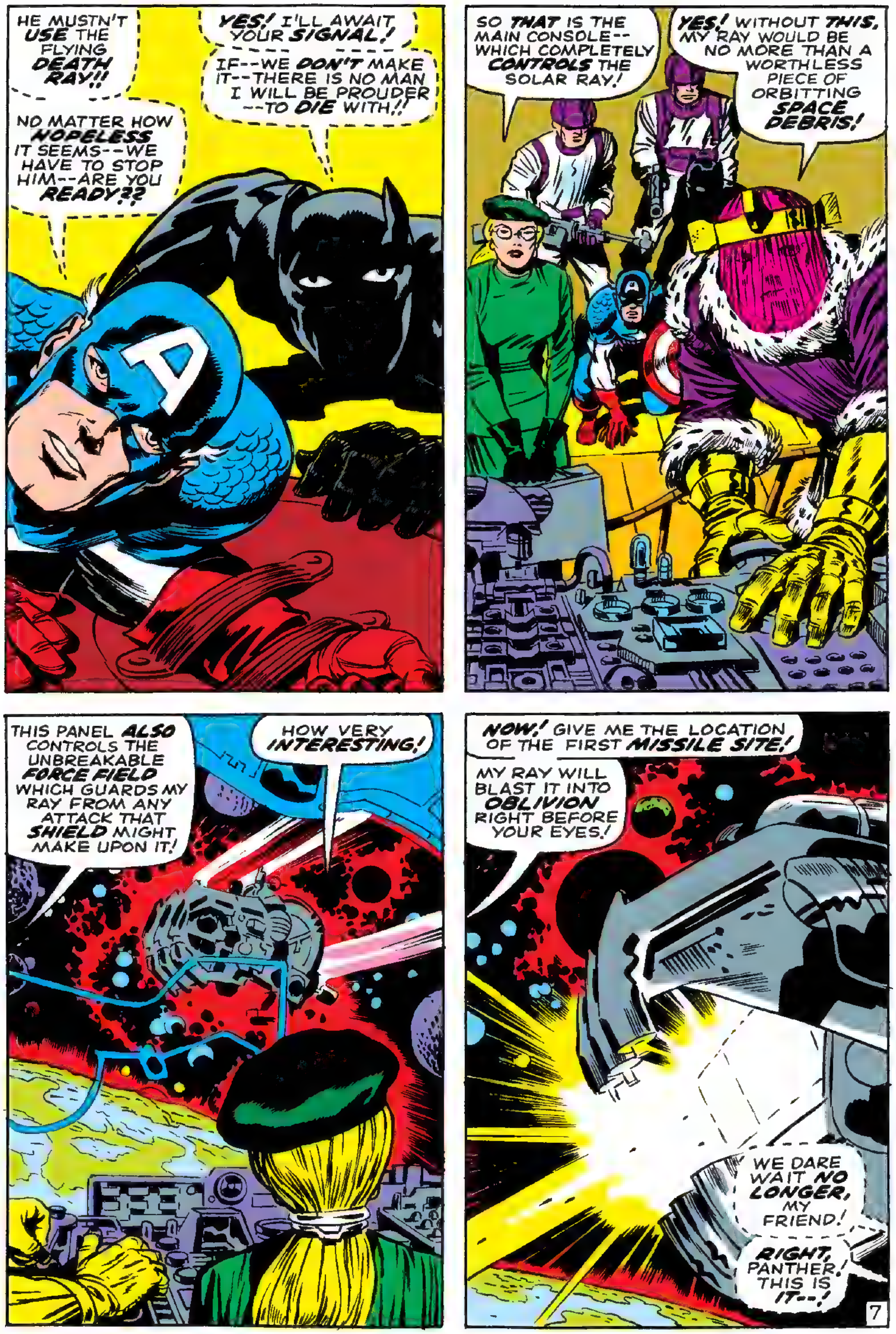

LET THE STRANGER WAIT!
O, MIGHTY LORD OF THE FROZEN ICE, HEAR OUR PRAYERS--!
THE FOOLS! THEY BOW TO A PETRIFIED FIGURE, FROZEN WITHIN THE ICE!
HEAR ME, HUMANS! THIS IS NO HELPLESS IMAGE YOU SEE BEFORE YOU!
THIS IS THE SUB-MARINER, WHO HAS SWORN VENGEANCE UPON THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!
THE DREADED PRINCE NAMOR!!
MIGHTY MONARCH OF FABLED ATLANTIS!
RUN--WEAK, HELPLESS MORTALS! RUN!!
FLEE IN TERROR BEFORE THE RIGHTFUL WRATH OF NAMOR!
THUS SHALL ALL ONE DAY RETREAT IN PANIC AT THE COMING OF THE SUB-MARINER!
AND TAKE YOUR ACCURSED IDOL WITH YOU!
LET THE WORD RING FORTH--
NAMOR IS RETURNED! NOW LET THE HUMAN RACE BEWARE!!
BUT, OUR STORY AT THIS TIME IS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE PRINCE OF THE DEEP, BUT WITH THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE SILENTLY FLOATING AWAY--DRIFTING TOWARDS THE GULF STREAM--
--WHERE THE WARMER WATERS CAUSE THE ROCK-HARD ICE SHEATH TO SLOWLY MELT-- UNTIL--
2


--NAUGHT REMAINS BUT A FROZEN FIGURE--A FIGURE WHICH DRIFTS PAST THE SLEEK UNDERSEA CRAFT OF--THE AVENGERS--
STOP ALL ENGINES! WE'VE SIGHTED SOMETHING!
HAVE WE FOUND THE SUB-MARINER AT LAST?
CAUTIOUSLY OPENING THE AIRTIGHT ESCAPE HATCH, THE HUGE HAND OF GIANT-MAN SEIZES THE RIGID FIGURE, AND--
I'VE GOT HIM!
BUT--IT ISN'T NAMOR--!
THERE'S A COSTUME OF SOME SORT BENEATH HIS TATTERED CLOTHES!!
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE IT?
IT'S THE FAMOUS RED-WHITE-AND BLUE GARB OF--CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THE WASP IS RIGHT!
'TIS MOST WONDROUSLY STRANGE!
HIS MASK--HIS ALMOST LEGENDARY SHIELD--
THE WORLD THOUGHT THAT HE--AND THEY--WERE LOST FOREVER!
HE--AND HIS YOUTHFUL PARTNER, BUCKY--VANISHED DURING A MISSION IN WORLD WAR II!
BUT--LOOK!! HE STILL LIVES!! HIS EYES--THEY'RE OPENING--!
BUCKY!! LOOK OUT!! GET OFF THAT PLANE--BEFORE IT EXPLODES!!
IT'S A TRAP!!--ZEMO PLANNED IT THIS WAY! BUCKY--NOOOO!
TOO LATE!! IT'S--TOO LATE!!
3

BUCKY'S GONE!! THE PLANE IS DESTROYED!!
IT WAS ZEMO-- WHO KILLED HIM!!
BUT WHY--AM I REMEMBERING NOW--HOW I WAS FROZEN IN THE ICE--AND FINALLY FOUND--AND BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE--BY THE AVENGERS?!!
IT HAPPENED SO MANY YEARS AGO!
WAIT! IT--IT'S COMING BACK TO ME!
THE PANTHER AND I--WE WERE CAPTURED--BY ZEMO!! THEN HIT WITH HIS RAY!
I--MUST HAVE BEEN--UNCONSCIOUS!
CAP! SNAP OUT OF IT! YOU'VE BEEN DELIRIOUS!
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE!!
ZEMO JUST ORDERED THE GIRL--TO SHOOT YOU!
GIRL? WHAT GIRL??
BACK! YOU CANNOT HELP HIM!
THE RAY-- IT'S WEARING OFF--AT LAST!
I HEAR--THE VOICE OF ZEMO AGAIN--ORDERING--MY DEATH!
YOU MUST PROVE YOUR LOYALTY TO ME--BY DESTROYING CAPTAIN AMERICA!
NOW! DO IT NOW!
I'VE GOT TO LEAP INTO ACT--NO! WAIT!
SHE'S HESITATING!! SHE DOESN'T WANT TO HURT ME!
WHO IS SHE?? WHY DOES SHE PAUSE--??
4


THE PRECEDING FLASHBACK WAS PRESENTED, OF COURSE, TO BRIEFLY FAMILIARIZE THE NEW READER WITH THE ORIGIN OF CAP'S PRESENT PREDICAMENT! THE "FROZEN-IN-THE-ICE" SEQUENCE WAS ORIGINALLY DEPICTED IN THE AVENGERS #4--AND WE ARE INDEBTED TO THE PUBLISHERS (NAMELY OURSELVES) FOR PERMISSION TO REDRAW IT AT THIS TIME!
AND NOW, LET THE WONDER-MENT UNFOLD--
MY MISSION IS TO DESTROY ZEMO'S DEATH RAY, WHICH IS ORBITTING ABOVE THE EARTH RIGHT NOW!
IF I FAIL--ALL OF MANKIND WILL BECOME HIS HOSTAGE!
BUT--AN AGENT OF SHIELD CANNOT FAIL--NOT EVEN IF SHE MUST--KILL THE ONE MAN--WHOM SHE LOVES THE MOST--IN ALL THE WORLD!!
FIRE, WOMAN--BLAST HIM IN HIS TRACKS!
OR ELSE--SHE WHO CALLS HERSELF IRMA KRUHL WILL DIE WITH HIM!
HE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE ME! HE DOESN'T YET REALIZE WHO I REALLY AM!
WE'VE BOTH SWORN TO GIVE OUR LIVES--IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM!! AND YET--
HOW CAN I DO IT? HOW? HOW??!
5


SUDDENLY, LIKE A STREAK OF EBONY LIGHTNING, THE BLACK PANTHER HURLS HIMSELF AT THE MASKED AVENGER--
DOWN, CAP!! DOWN!!
THEN DIE, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
BAH! THE FEMALE MISSED!
ONLY I COULD TELL--
SHE AIMED INCHES ABOVE MY HEAD!!
FOOLS! YOU THINK THAT CAN SAVE YOU?
CAN I NOT FIRE AGAIN-- AND AGAIN?
THEN WHY DOES SHE MERELY SPEAK? WHY DOESN'T SHE FIRE AGAIN?
WHAT IS HER REAL PURPOSE?
LET US SAVE THEM FOR LATER, ZEMO! IT IS THE MISSION THAT MATTERS MOST!
PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT!
HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME THE VITAL INFORMATION?
OF COURSE!
IRMA KRUHL DOES NOT FAIL!
IN THIS CASE I HAVE THE LOCATION OF EVERY IMPORTANT MISSILE BASE ON EARTH!
WITHIN A MATTER OF MINUTES, YOUR ORBITTING SOLAR RAY CAN DESTROY THEM ALL!
EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!
LET US BEGIN AT ONCE!
THEN WE SHALL RETURN AND DEVISE A FITTING FATE FOR OUR HELPLESS CAPTIVES!
I MUST LEAVE YOU, MY DARLING!
EVERY-THING DEPENDS UPON THE NEXT FEW MINUTES!
6



HE MUSTN'T USE THE FLYING DEATH RAY!!
YES! I'LL AWAIT YOUR SIGNAL!
IF--WE DON'T MAKE IT--THERE IS NO MAN I WILL BE PROUDER --TO DIE WITH!!
NO MATTER HOW HOPELESS IT SEEMS--WE HAVE TO STOP HIM--ARE YOU READY??
SO THAT IS THE MAIN CONSOLE-- WHICH COMPLETELY CONTROLS THE SOLAR RAY!
YES! WITHOUT THIS, MY RAY WOULD BE NO MORE THAN A WORTHLESS PIECE OF ORBITTING SPACE DEBRIS!
THIS PANEL ALSO CONTROLS THE UNBREAKABLE FORCE FIELD WHICH GUARDS MY RAY FROM ANY ATTACK THAT SHIELD MIGHT MAKE UPON IT!
HOW VERY INTERESTING!
NOW! GIVE ME THE LOCATION OF THE FIRST MISSILE SITE!
MY RAY WILL BLAST IT INTO OBLIVION RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!
WE DARE WAIT NO LONGER, MY FRIEND!
RIGHT, PANTHER! THIS IS IT--!
7

BUT, BEFORE THE TWO COSTUMED CAPTIVES CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE-- THEY SEE--
LOOK!! WITHIN HER CASE--A MINIATURIZED FLAME-THROWER!!
AND NOW, ZEMO--IT IS MY TURN--!
KLIK!
SNAP!
STOP HER!
IF THOSE FLAMES HIT MY CONTROL PANEL-- ALL IS LOST!!
YOU'RE TOO LATE!
SPLASKK!
NOOO--!
SHE'S A SPY!! AN AGENT OF SHIELD!
SHOOT HER! SHOOT HER!
I'D FACE A THOUSAND DEATHS--
TO SAVE THE WORLD--FROM A MADMAN LIKE YOU!
BUT YOU'LL NOT FACE THEM ALONE!!
--NOT WHILE THE PANTHER AND I STILL LIVE!
ATTACK!
8

THIS TIME OUR SENSES ARE NOT DEADENED BY YOUR COWARDLY FUMES!
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE EVERY BLOW COUNT!
BTANNG!
WE CAN'T WASTE TIME WITH THE SMALL FRY--
NOT WHEN IT'S ZEMO WE'RE AFTER!
9

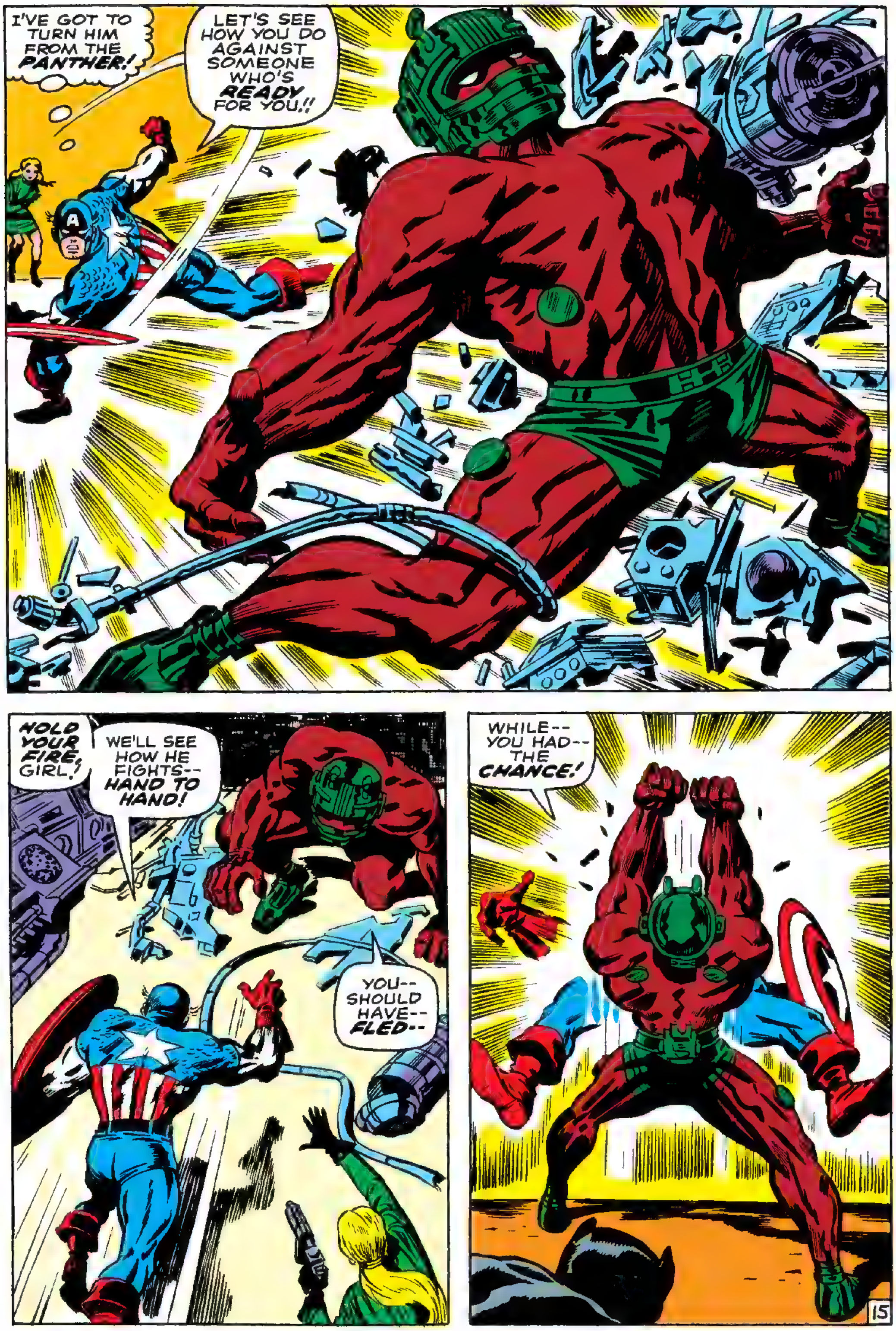
THE GIRL!!
SHE SAVED MY LIFE A SECOND TIME--!
CAP!! LOOK OUT!! --BEHIND YOU--!
MEDDLESOME FEMALE!! YOU WILL PAY DEARLY FOR THIS!!
DON'T EVER THREATEN AN AGENT OF SHIELD!!
HER GLASSES FELL OFF!
HER HAIR --TUMBLING DOWN IN-- WAIT!! IT'S--IT'S--
AGENT THIRTEEN!!
OH, CAP! I WAS SO AFRAID--THAT WE'D NEVER--FIND EACH OTHER!!
ATTENTION ALL UNITS!!
REINFORCEMENTS ON THE WAY, EXCELLENCY!
RED ALERT!! RED ALERT!!
HIS COMMUNICATOR!! HE MUST NOT USE IT AGAIN!
AND HE NEVER WILL, PANTHER!
ZAKK!
THE THREE OF YOU ARE DOOMED!
AGAIN YOU ARE TOO LATE!
HELP IS ALREADY ON THE WAY!!
10

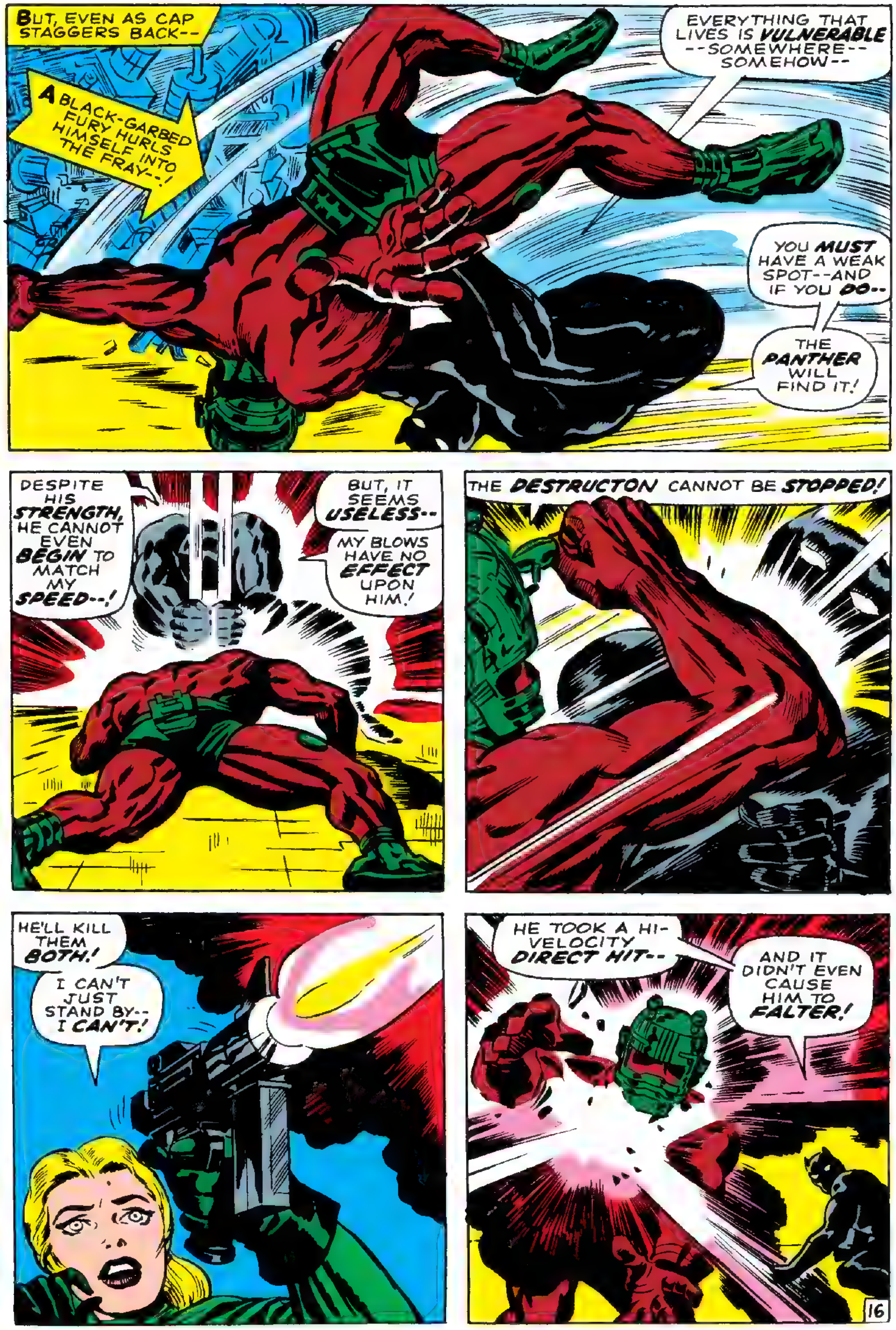
WE CANNOT REMAIN HERE!
WE MUST FIND COVER!
IN THE CORRIDOR-- QUICK!
WE'LL SOON HAVE HALF AN ARMY TO FIGHT!
EVEN IF WE FAIL--IT WAS WORTH IT!!
WE'VE CRUSHED ZEMO'S THREAT TO ALL MANKIND!
DON'T SPEAK OF FAILING!!
I HAVEN'T FOUND YOU AT LAST, ONLY TO LOSE YOU AGAIN!
EASY NOW--WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S AHEAD OF US!
STAND BACK! THIS IS A TASK FOR THE PANTHER!
I CAN SENSE AN AMBUSH NO MATTER HOW WELL-CONCEALED IT MAY BE!
THEN, AFTER TENSE MINUTES OF CAREFUL ADVANCING--
JUST AHEAD OF US--THE DULL THROBBING OF HEAVY FOOTFALLS!
ZEMO'S REINFORCE-MENTS!
THERE ARE MANY OF THEM--
FAR TOO MANY!
11

THERE THEY ARE--WE HAVE FOUND THEM!
REMEMBER THE MASTER'S COMMAND--
SHOOT TO KILL!
THEY MUST NOT ESCAPE ALIVE!
TOO MANY TO FIGHT--!
WE MUST LOSE THEM--SOMEHOW!!
THEY ARE COMPLETELY TRAPPED!!
THERE IS NO PLACE THEY CAN RUN!
HE FOUND THE TUNNEL DOOR CONTROL BUTTON!
BUT IT WON'T HELP THEM! FIRE!!
CLICK!
OPEN
CLOSE
LET THE GIRL STAND BEHIND US!!
THEY ARE ALMOST HERE!!
BUT, WE'LL SHOW THEM HOW DEARLY FREE MEN SELL THEIR LIVES!
NO! WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE!
--IF I CAN SMASH THE ENTRANCE TO THIS AIR VENT--!
HURRY! I'VE A GUN--I'LL HOLD THEM OFF--!

NO! TAKE HER WITH YOU, PANTHER!
QUICKLY! ONCE YOU'RE SAFE, I'LL COME BACK AND HELP HIM!
IF ANYONE HOLDS THEM OFF--IT MUST BE ME!
CAP--IF ANYTHING--SHOULD HAPPEN--
NO! DON'T EVEN SAY IT--!
KEEP MOVING!
I CAN HOLD THEM OFF--FOR AT LEAST TWO MINUTES--!
THE VENT IS LARGER THAN WE THOUGHT!
THERE'S ROOM FOR ALL OF US AT ONCE!
HURRY, AVENGER! WE'LL GO TOGETHER!
SO FAR, SO GOOD!
ONLY ONE OF THEM CAN CLIMB THRU THE OPENING AT ONE TIME--
AND THEY DON'T DARE--WHILE MY AMMO HOLDS OUT!
BUT, WHAT'S AHEAD?? WHERE DOES THE VENT LEAD TO??
WE--DON'T KNOW--YET!
WHATEVER AWAITS US AT THE OTHER END--
--WE WILL OVERCOME!
THERE'LL BE NO TURNING BACK!
THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!
IT'S SUDDEN DEATH TO GO AFTER THEM!
STOP, YOU FOOLS!! STOP!!
LET THEM GO!
I WANT THEM TO REACH THE OTHER END OF THE VENT--!
HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN--?
THAT IS WHERE THE DESTRUCTON STANDS GUARD!
THE DESTRUCTON!!
13

HE WAS CREATED TO BE--THE ULTIMATE BODYGUARD!!
NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN GET PAST HIM!
HE CANNOT BE STOPPED--HE CANNOT BE BEATEN!
AND--THEY'LL REACH HIM--WITHIN SECONDS!
AT THE OTHER END OF THE VENT--EVEN AS THE MASKED MENACE RANTS--
WE'RE THROUGH!
I'LL GO FIRST--AND CHECK FOR SUDDEN TRAPS!
THE LIGHT IS DIM--AS THOUGH SOMETHING HIDES IN WAIT--!
I SENSE ANOTHER FIGURE--IN THE SHADOWS--MOVING CLOSER--CLOSER--!
SKOP!
UNHHH!
I AM--THE DESTRUCTON!
IT IS MY FUNCTION--TO ATTACK--ANY WHO INVADE THESE QUARTERS!
AND--WHOM I DO ATTACK--I DO DESTROY!
14

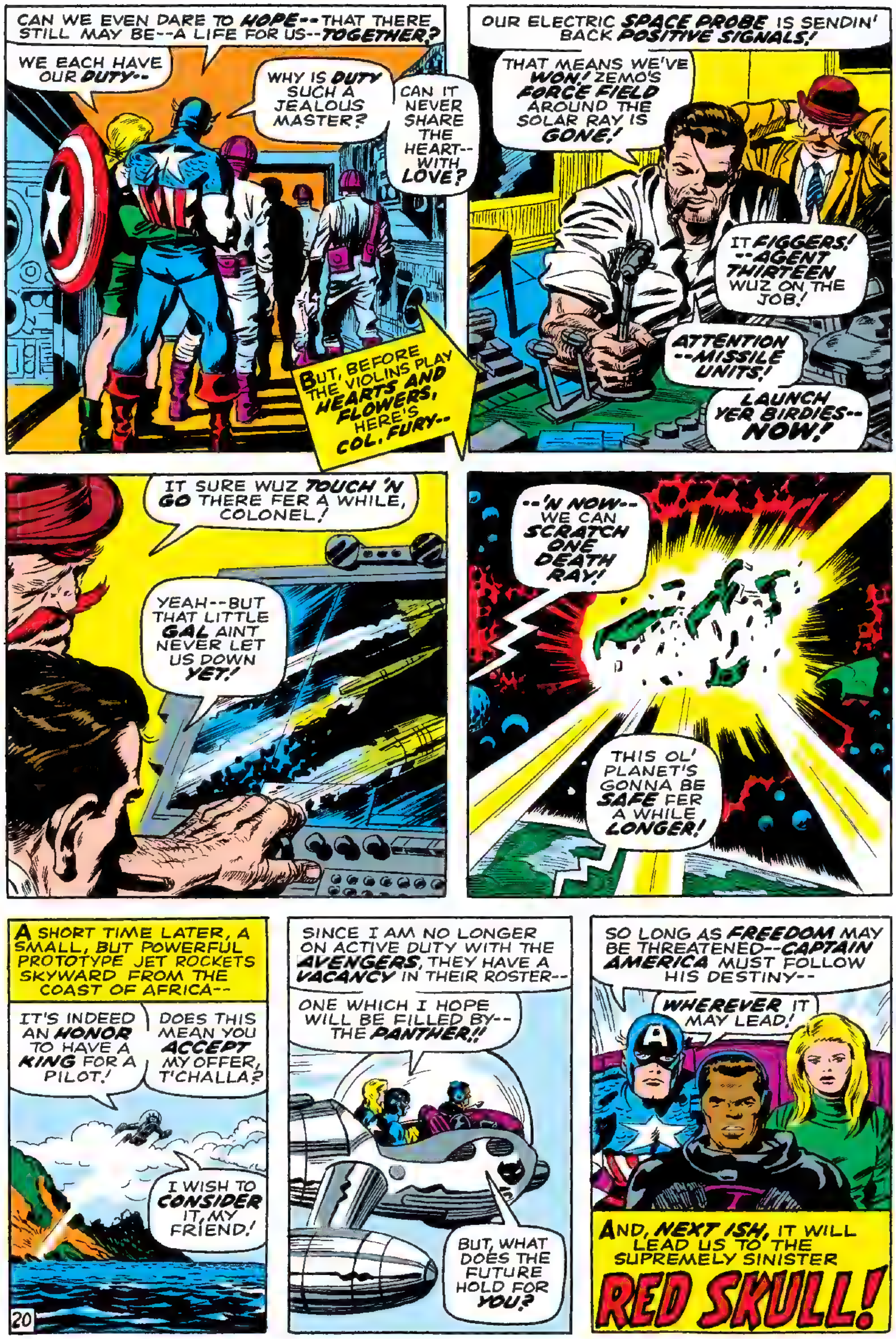

I'VE GOT TO TURN HIM FROM THE PANTHER!
LET'S SEE HOW YOU DO AGAINST SOMEONE WHO'S READY FOR YOU!!
HOLD YOUR FIRE, GIRL!
WE'LL SEE HOW HE FIGHTS-- HAND TO HAND!
YOU-- SHOULD HAVE-- FLED--
WHILE-- YOU HAD-- THE CHANCE!
15


BUT, EVEN AS CAP STAGGERS BACK--
A BLACK-GARBED FURY HURLS HIMSELF INTO THE FRAY--!
EVERYTHING THAT LIVES IS VULNERABLE --SOMEWHERE-- SOMEHOW--
YOU MUST HAVE A WEAK SPOT--AND IF YOU DO--
THE PANTHER WILL FIND IT!
DESPITE HIS STRENGTH, HE CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO MATCH MY SPEED--!
BUT, IT SEEMS USELESS--
MY BLOWS HAVE NO EFFECT UPON HIM!
THE DESTRUCTON CANNOT BE STOPPED!
HE'LL KILL THEM BOTH!
I CAN'T JUST STAND BY-- I CAN'T!
HE TOOK A HI-VELOCITY DIRECT HIT--
AND IT DIDN'T EVEN CAUSE HIM TO FALTER!
16

WAIT! DON'T WASTE ANY MORE EXPLOSIVE SHELLS!
I WANT TO TRY SOMETHING MY WAY!
I NOTICED TWO METAL STUDS UPON HIS TORSO--!
THEY MUST BE HIS MAIN FUNCTION CONTROLS!
IF I CAN MANAGE--TO PUT THEM--OUT OF ACTION--!
HURRY--BEFORE HE TURNS!
IF I GUESSED RIGHT--HE'LL NEVER TURN AGAIN!
MY HUNCH PAID OFF!
I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SMASH HIS MOBILITY CONTROL--!
HE'LL NEVER MOVE AGAIN!
A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, THE CHAMBER IS FILLED WITH ZEMO, AND HIS MERCILESS PRIVATE MILITIA--!
IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!
NOTHING ON EARTH CAN TOPPLE MY DESTRUCTON!
YOUR ROBOT WAS POWERFUL AS YOU CLAIMED, ZEMO--!
BUT YOU GAVE HIM AN ACHILLES' HEEL--
BY DESTROYING HIS CONTROL STUDS--
--HE BECOMES TOTALLY HELPLESS!
17

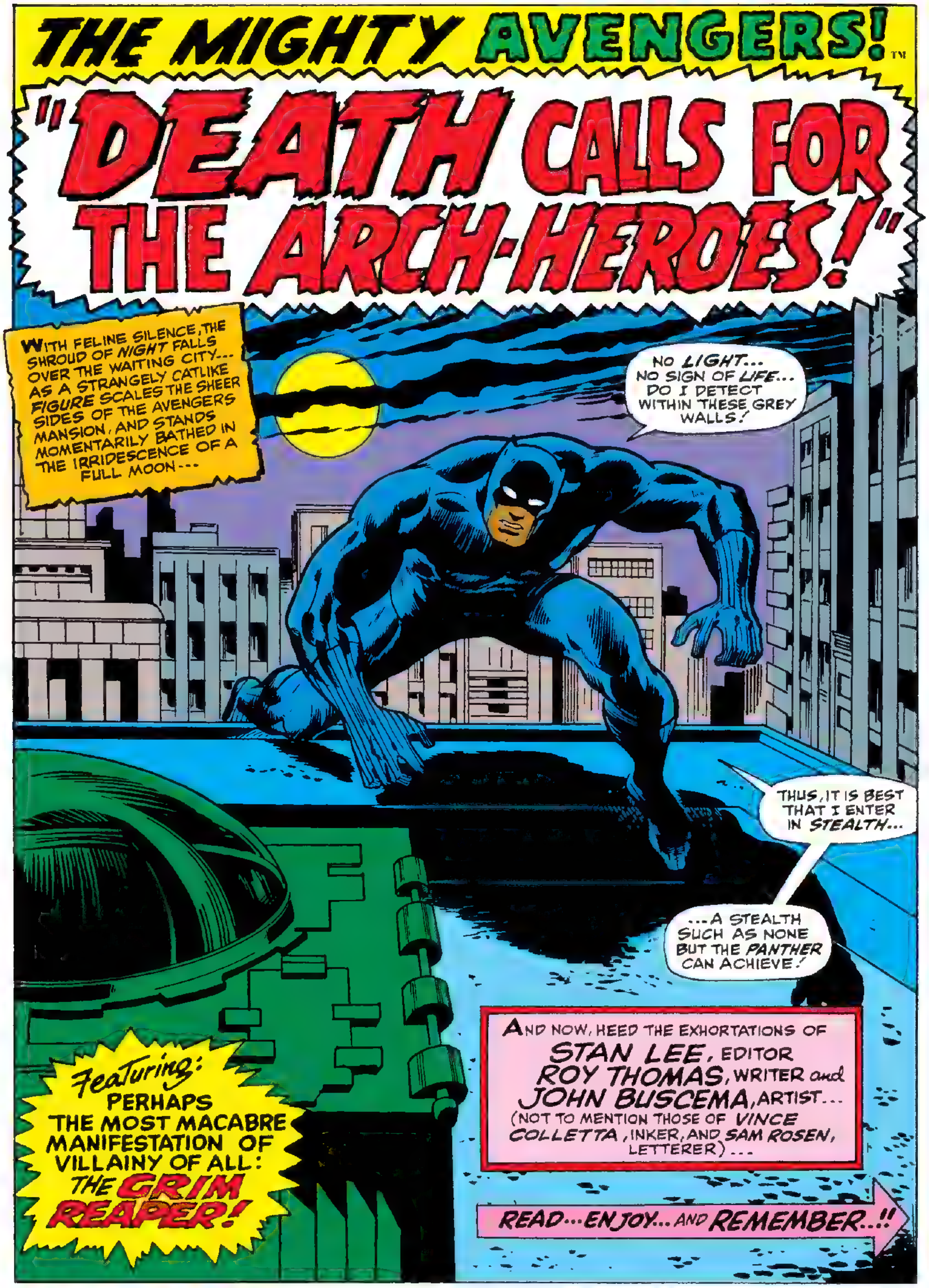
YOU'VE FRUSTRATED ME FOR THE LAST TIME!
FIRE AT WILL!!
IT WON'T WORK, ZEMO--!
YOU'VE MADE YOUR FINAL MISTAKE!
HOLD YOUR FIRE!!
YOU'RE FIGHTING IN BEHALF OF AN IMPOSTOR--!
THIS ISN'T THE REAL BARON ZEMO--!
--AND I CAN PROVE IT!
I NOTICED THAT HIS FACE MASK WAS LOOSE!
ZEMO'S WAS TIGHT AS A DRUM!
NOBODY COULD EVER REMOVE IT--LIKE THIS!
I--ADMIT IT!
I'M NOT-- BARON ZEMO!!
NOW I RECOGNIZE YOU--
I WAS ZEMO'S PILOT! I FLEW OVER THE SITE THE DAY HE DIED--
THEN, I WAITED TILL HIS DEATH WAS FORGOTTEN, AND I RETURNED TO THE SITE!
I STUDIED HIS PAPERS-- LEARNED HIS SECRETS--
TRAITOR!! YOU HAVE DECEIVED US!
WE SERVE ONLY ZEMO!
BUT--DON'T YOU SEE?? ZEMO IS DEAD!
YOU LIED TO US! YOU MUST PAY FOR THAT!
KRRAAK!!
THE ENTIRE WORLD --WAS ALMOST-- WITHIN MY GRASP--
BUT NOW-- IT'S ENDED-- FOREVER!
UHHHH!
18

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!!
NO LONGER IS THERE REASON FOR YOU TO FIGHT!
YOU ARE WITHOUT LEADER--WITHOUT CAUSE!
HE'S RIGHT! THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO PAY US--!
BUT WHAT DO WE DO?
I AM T'CHALLA--SON OF T'CHAKA--KING OF ALL THE WAKANDA!
HE STANDS BEFORE THEM LIKE A LEADER BORN--IN WHOSE VEINS THE BLOOD OF CHIEFTAINS FLOWS!
EVEN NOW, MY WARRIORS SURROUND THIS BUNKER--AWAITING MY COMMAND!
THERE IS NO PLACE IN ALL THE JUNGLE WHERE YOU CAN HIDE--NO PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FLEE!
I PLEDGE YOU FAIR TRIAL! I PLEDGE THE JUSTICE OF THE WAKANDA!
THE DECISION IS YOURS!
WE HAVE NO CHOICE!
WE ACCEPT YOUR TERMS!
THE THREAT IS ENDED!
THE BATTLE WON!
ONLY ONE THING REMAINS!
THE DEADLY SOLAR RAY IS STILL IN ORBIT ABOVE US!
BUT NOW--AT LAST--IT CAN BE DESTROYED
AND THEN--WHAT OF US?
19

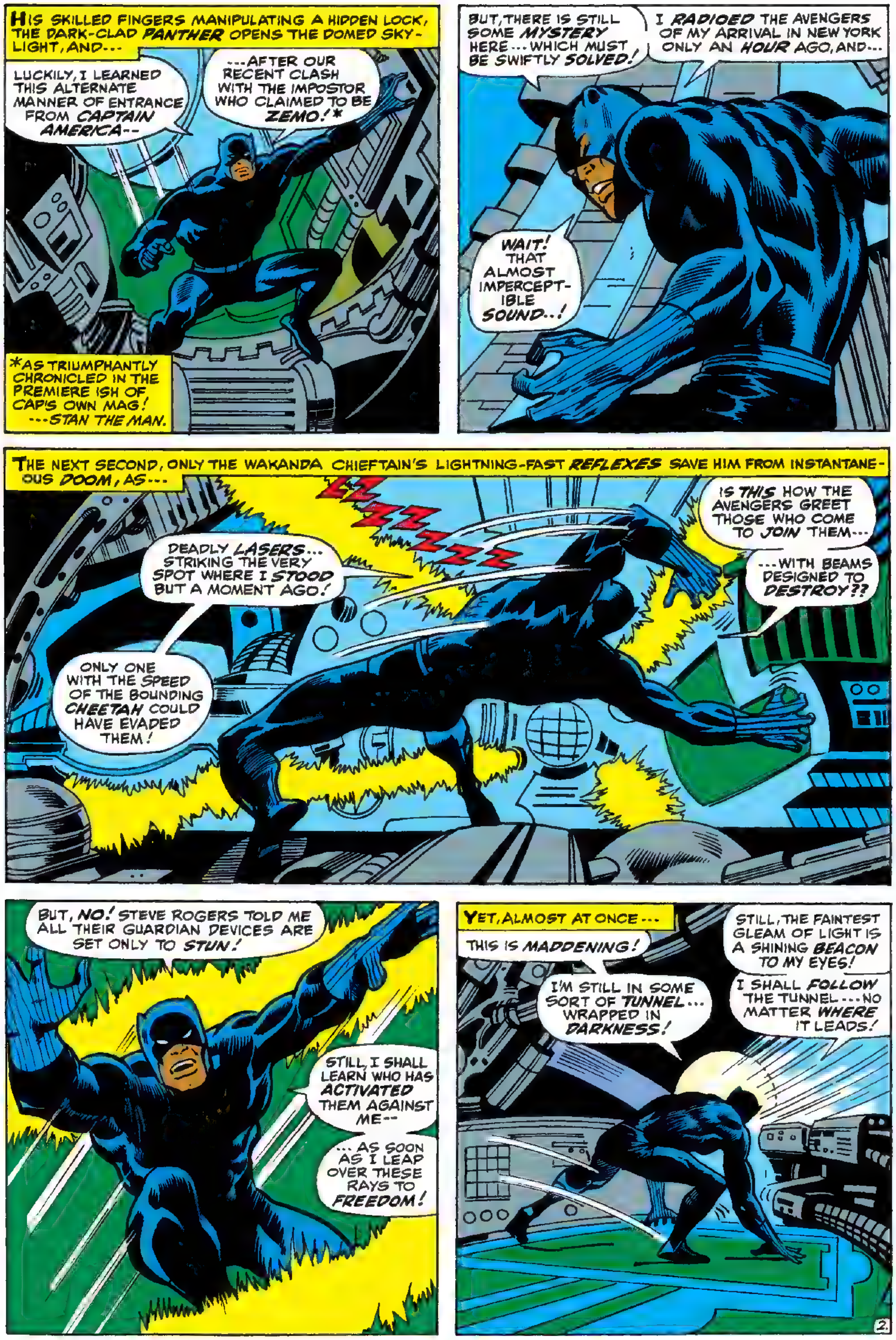


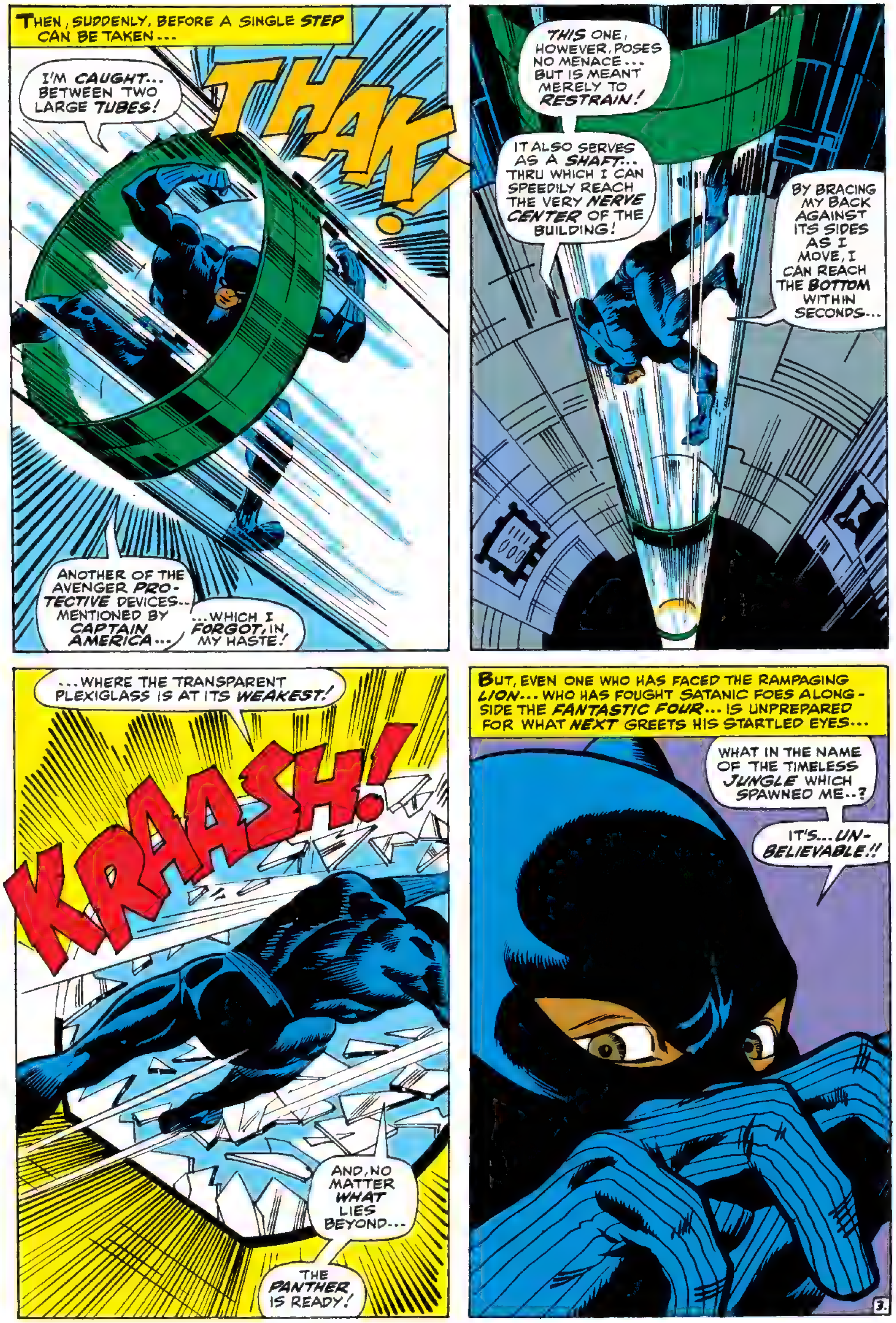
CAN WE EVEN DARE TO HOPE--THAT THERE STILL MAY BE--A LIFE FOR US--TOGETHER?
WE EACH HAVE OUR DUTY--
WHY IS DUTY SUCH A JEALOUS MASTER?
CAN IT NEVER SHARE THE HEART--WITH LOVE?
BUT, BEFORE THE VIOLINS PLAY HEARTS AND FLOWERS, HERE'S COL. FURY--
OUR ELECTRIC SPACE PROBE IS SENDIN' BACK POSITIVE SIGNALS!
THAT MEANS WE'VE WON! ZEMO'S FORCE FIELD AROUND THE SOLAR RAY IS GONE!
IT FIGGERS! --AGENT THIRTEEN WUZ ON THE JOB!
ATTENTION --MISSILE UNITS!
LAUNCH YER BIRDIES--NOW!
IT SURE WUZ TOUCH 'N GO THERE FER A WHILE, COLONEL!
YEAH--BUT THAT LITTLE GAL AINT NEVER LET US DOWN YET!
--'N NOW--WE CAN SCRATCH ONE DEATH RAY!
THIS OL' PLANET'S GONNA BE SAFE FER A WHILE LONGER!
A SHORT TIME LATER, A SMALL, BUT POWERFUL PROTOTYPE JET ROCKETS SKYWARD FROM THE COAST OF AFRICA--
IT'S INDEED AN HONOR TO HAVE A KING FOR A PILOT!
DOES THIS MEAN YOU ACCEPT MY OFFER, T'CHALLA?
I WISH TO CONSIDER IT, MY FRIEND!
20
SINCE I AM NO LONGER ON ACTIVE DUTY WITH THE AVENGERS, THEY HAVE A VACANCY IN THEIR ROSTER--
ONE WHICH I HOPE WILL BE FILLED BY--THE PANTHER!!
BUT, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR YOU?
SO LONG AS FREEDOM MAY BE THREATENED--CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST FOLLOW HIS DESTINY--
WHEREVER IT MAY LEAD!
AND, NEXT ISH, IT WILL LEAD US TO THE SUPREMELY SINISTER
RED SKULL!

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
52 MAY
MCG
THE GRIM REAPER!
THE MAN WHO KILLED THE AVENGERS!

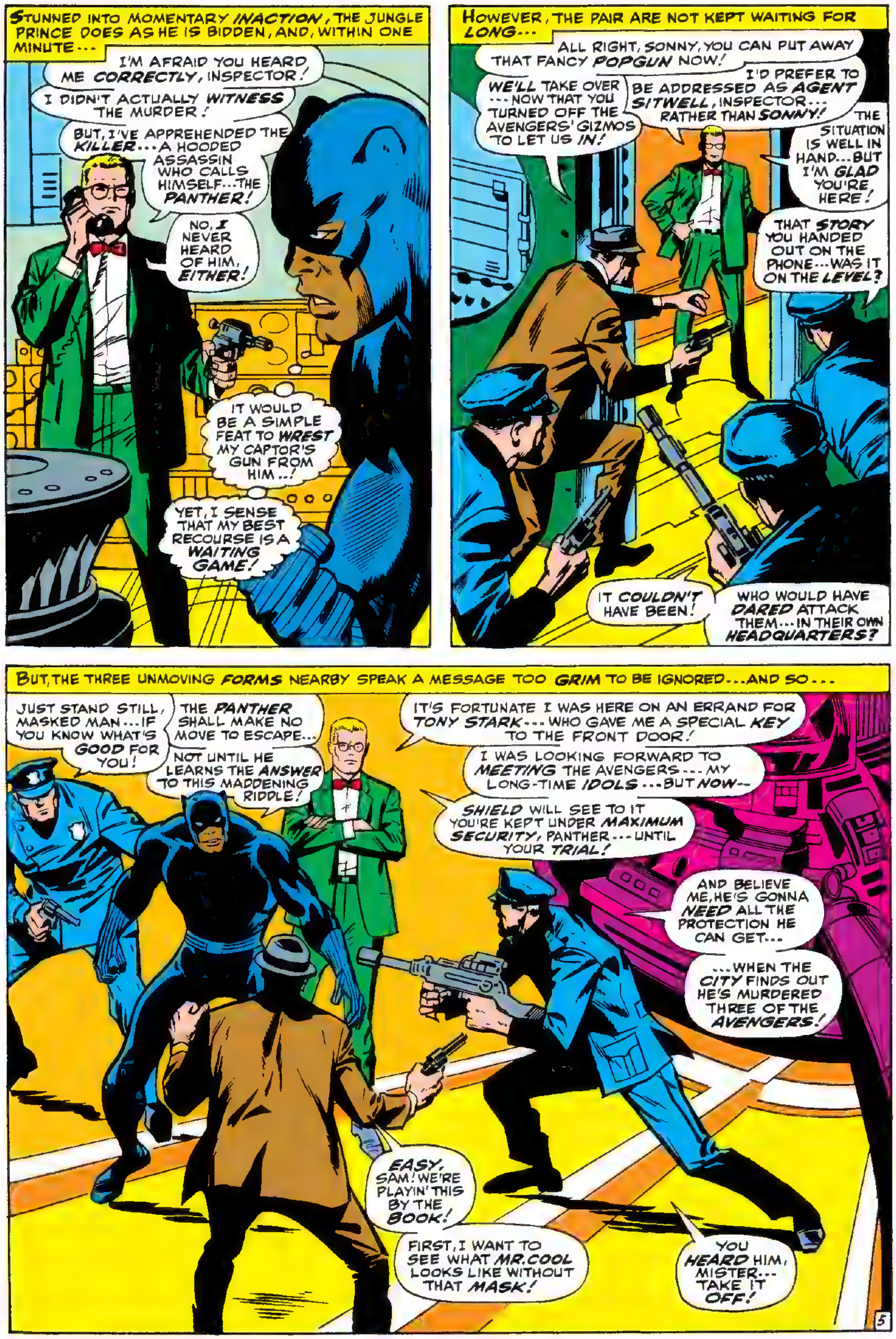


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!™
"DEATH CALLS FOR THE ARCH-HEROES!"
WITH FELINE SILENCE, THE SHROUD OF NIGHT FALLS OVER THE WAITING CITY--- AS A STRANGELY CATLIKE FIGURE SCALES THE SHEER SIDES OF THE AVENGERS MANSION, AND STANDS MOMENTARILY BATHED IN THE IRRIDESCENCE OF A FULL MOON---
NO LIGHT... NO SIGN OF LIFE... DO I DETECT WITHIN THESE GREY WALLS!
THUS, IT IS BEST THAT I ENTER IN STEALTH...
...A STEALTH SUCH AS NONE BUT THE PANTHER CAN ACHIEVE!
FEATURING: PERHAPS THE MOST MACABRE MANIFESTATION OF VILLAINY OF ALL: THE GRIM REAPER!
AND NOW, HEED THE EXHORTATIONS OF STAN LEE, EDITOR ROY THOMAS, WRITER and JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST... (NOT TO MENTION THOSE OF VINCE COLLETTA, INKER, AND SAM ROSEN, LETTERER)...
READ...ENJOY...AND REMEMBER..!!

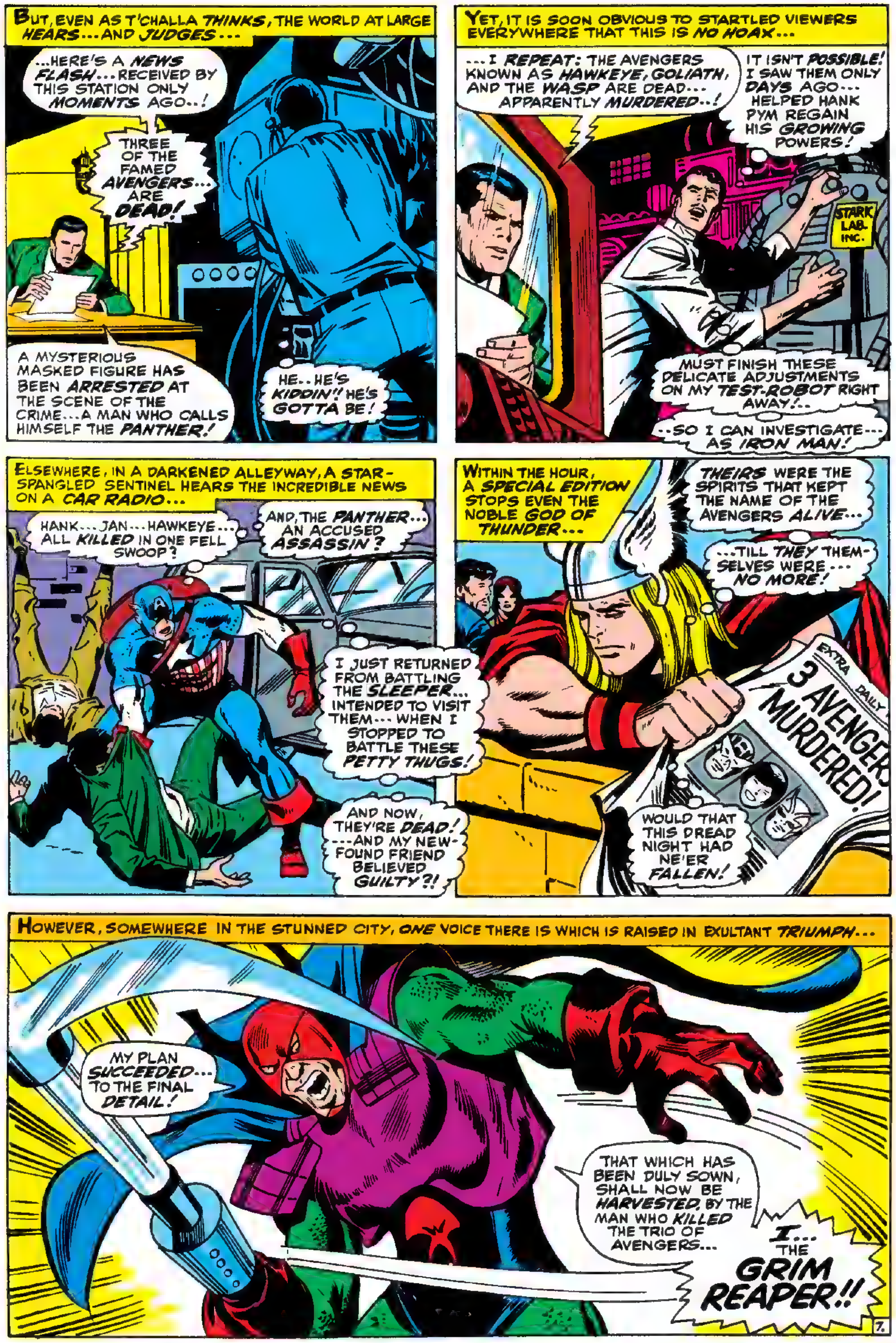

HIS SKILLED FINGERS MANIPULATING A HIDDEN LOCK, THE DARK-CLAD PANTHER OPENS THE DOMED SKY-LIGHT, AND---
LUCKILY, I LEARNED THIS ALTERNATE MANNER OF ENTRANCE FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA--
---AFTER OUR RECENT CLASH WITH THE IMPOSTOR WHO CLAIMED TO BE ZEMO!*
*AS TRIUMPHANTLY CHRONICLED IN THE PREMIERE ISH OF CAP'S OWN MAG! ---STAN THE MAN.
BUT, THERE IS STILL SOME MYSTERY HERE... WHICH MUST BE SWIFTLY SOLVED!
I RADIOED THE AVENGERS OF MY ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK ONLY AN HOUR AGO, AND...
WAIT! THAT ALMOST IMPERCEPT-IBLE SOUND..!
THE NEXT SECOND, ONLY THE WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN'S LIGHTNING-FAST REFLEXES SAVE HIM FROM INSTANTANE-OUS DOOM, AS---
DEADLY LASERS... STRIKING THE VERY SPOT WHERE I STOOD BUT A MOMENT AGO!
ONLY ONE WITH THE SPEED OF THE BOUNDING CHEETAH COULD HAVE EVADED THEM!
IS THIS HOW THE AVENGERS GREET THOSE WHO COME TO JOIN THEM---
---WITH BEAMS DESIGNED TO DESTROY??
BUT, NO! STEVE ROGERS TOLD ME ALL THEIR GUARDIAN DEVICES ARE SET ONLY TO STUN!
STILL, I SHALL LEARN WHO HAS ACTIVATED THEM AGAINST ME--
...AS SOON AS I LEAP OVER THESE RAYS TO FREEDOM!
YET, ALMOST AT ONCE---
THIS IS MADDENING!
I'M STILL IN SOME SORT OF TUNNEL... WRAPPED IN DARKNESS!
STILL, THE FAINTEST GLEAM OF LIGHT IS A SHINING BEACON TO MY EYES!
I SHALL FOLLOW THE TUNNEL---NO MATTER WHERE IT LEADS!
2


THEN, SUDDENLY, BEFORE A SINGLE STEP CAN BE TAKEN...
I'M CAUGHT... BETWEEN TWO LARGE TUBES!
THAK!
ANOTHER OF THE AVENGER PROTECTIVE DEVICES... MENTIONED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA...
...WHICH I FORGOT, IN MY HASTE!
THIS ONE, HOWEVER, POSES NO MENACE... BUT IS MEANT MERELY TO RESTRAIN!
IT ALSO SERVES AS A SHAFT... THRU WHICH I CAN SPEEDILY REACH THE VERY NERVE CENTER OF THE BUILDING!
BY BRACING MY BACK AGAINST ITS SIDES AS I MOVE, I CAN REACH THE BOTTOM WITHIN SECONDS...
...WHERE THE TRANSPARENT PLEXIGLASS IS AT ITS WEAKEST!
KRAASH!
AND, NO MATTER WHAT LIES BEYOND...
THE PANTHER IS READY!
BUT, EVEN ONE WHO HAS FACED THE RAMPAGING LION... WHO HAS FOUGHT SATANIC FOES ALONG-SIDE THE FANTASTIC FOUR... IS UNPREPARED FOR WHAT NEXT GREETS HIS STARTLED EYES...
WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE TIMELESS JUNGLE WHICH SPAWNED ME..?
IT'S... UN-BELIEVABLE!!
3.

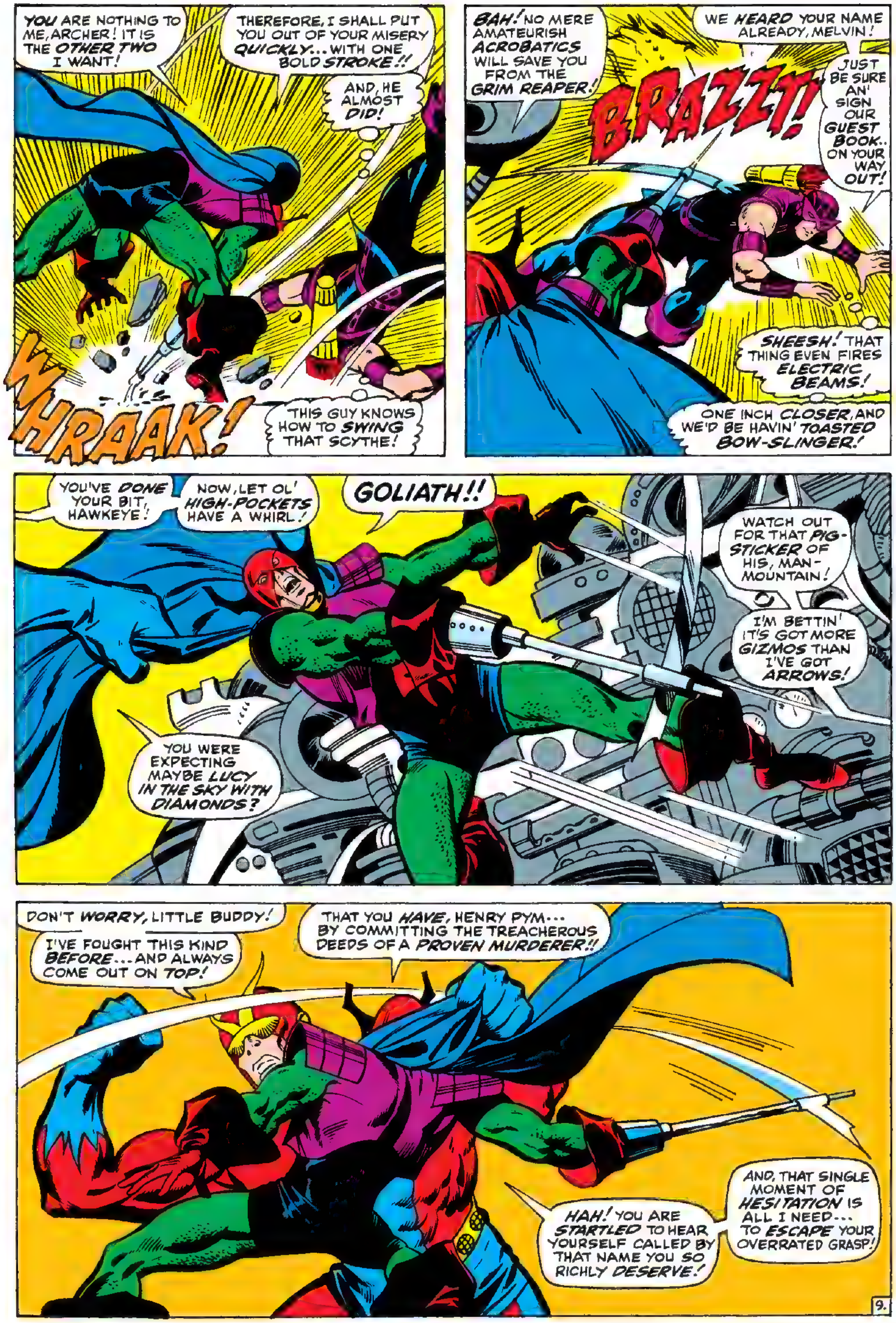
THE AVENGERS... DEAD!!
INSTANTLY, THE AGILE AFRICAN LEAPS TO THE SIDE OF THE NEAREST UNMOVING FORM...
I DARED HOPE I WAS WRONG...
THAT, SOMEHOW, IN THE GLOOMY DARKNESS, MY EYES HAD DECEIVED ME... MY JUNGLE-TRAINED SENSES ERRED!
BUT, THERE IS NO PULSE... NO SLIGHTEST BREATH..!
HOLD! SOMEONE JUST ENTERED THE ROOM!
WHO..??
A MOMENT LATER, BRILLIANT LIGHT FLOODS THE CHAMBER... BEFORE EVEN THE PANTHER CAN REACT...
SOME SORT OF WEAPON... AIMED TOWARDS ME!
IN MY CONCERN, I WAS CARELESS!
THAT YOU WERE, MY MYSTERIOUS MASKED FRIEND...
AND NOW, NO AMOUNT OF FALSE ANXIETY WILL PULL THE WOOL OVER THE EYES OF AN AGENT OF SHIELD!
YOU'RE HEREBY UNDER ARREST... FOR THE MURDER OF THOSE THREE AVENGERS!
BUT, I ARRIVED HERE ONLY SECONDS BEFORE YOU DID... AND DISCOVERED THEM, JUST AS THEY ARE...!
BEFORE YOU GO ON, IT'S MY DUTY TO WARN YOU OF YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS!
SAVE YOUR EXCUSES! JASPER SITWELL WASN'T BORN YESTERDAY!
STAND AGAINST THE WALL... WHILE I CONTACT THE POLICE!
4.


STUNNED INTO MOMENTARY INACTION, THE JUNGLE PRINCE DOES AS HE IS BIDDEN, AND, WITHIN ONE MINUTE...
I'M AFRAID YOU HEARD ME CORRECTLY, INSPECTOR!
I DIDN'T ACTUALLY WITNESS THE MURDER!
BUT, I'VE APPREHENDED THE KILLER... A HOODED ASSASSIN WHO CALLS HIMSELF... THE PANTHER!
NO, I NEVER HEARD OF HIM, EITHER!
IT WOULD BE A SIMPLE FEAT TO WREST MY CAPTOR'S GUN FROM HIM...!
YET, I SENSE THAT MY BEST RECOURSE IS A WAITING GAME!
HOWEVER, THE PAIR ARE NOT KEPT WAITING FOR LONG...
ALL RIGHT, SONNY, YOU CAN PUT AWAY THAT FANCY POPGUN NOW!
WE'LL TAKE OVER... NOW THAT YOU TURNED OFF THE AVENGERS' GIZMOS TO LET US IN!
I'D PREFER TO BE ADDRESSED AS AGENT SITWELL, INSPECTOR... RATHER THAN SONNY!
THE SITUATION IS WELL IN HAND... BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE!
THAT STORY YOU HANDED OUT ON THE PHONE... WAS IT ON THE LEVEL?
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN!
WHO WOULD HAVE DARED ATTACK THEM... IN THEIR OWN HEADQUARTERS?
BUT, THE THREE UNMOVING FORMS NEARBY SPEAK A MESSAGE TOO GRIM TO BE IGNORED... AND SO...
JUST STAND STILL, MASKED MAN... IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!
THE PANTHER SHALL MAKE NO MOVE TO ESCAPE...
NOT UNTIL HE LEARNS THE ANSWER TO THIS MADDENING RIDDLE!
IT'S FORTUNATE I WAS HERE ON AN ERRAND FOR TONY STARK... WHO GAVE ME A SPECIAL KEY TO THE FRONT DOOR!
I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING THE AVENGERS... MY LONG-TIME IDOLS... BUT NOW--
SHIELD WILL SEE TO IT YOU'RE KEPT UNDER MAXIMUM SECURITY, PANTHER... UNTIL YOUR TRIAL!
AND BELIEVE ME, HE'S GONNA NEED ALL THE PROTECTION HE CAN GET...
...WHEN THE CITY FINDS OUT HE'S MURDERED THREE OF THE AVENGERS!
EASY, SAM! WE'RE PLAYIN' THIS BY THE BOOK!
FIRST, I WANT TO SEE WHAT MR. COOL LOOKS LIKE WITHOUT THAT MASK!
YOU HEARD HIM, MISTER... TAKE IT OFF!
5

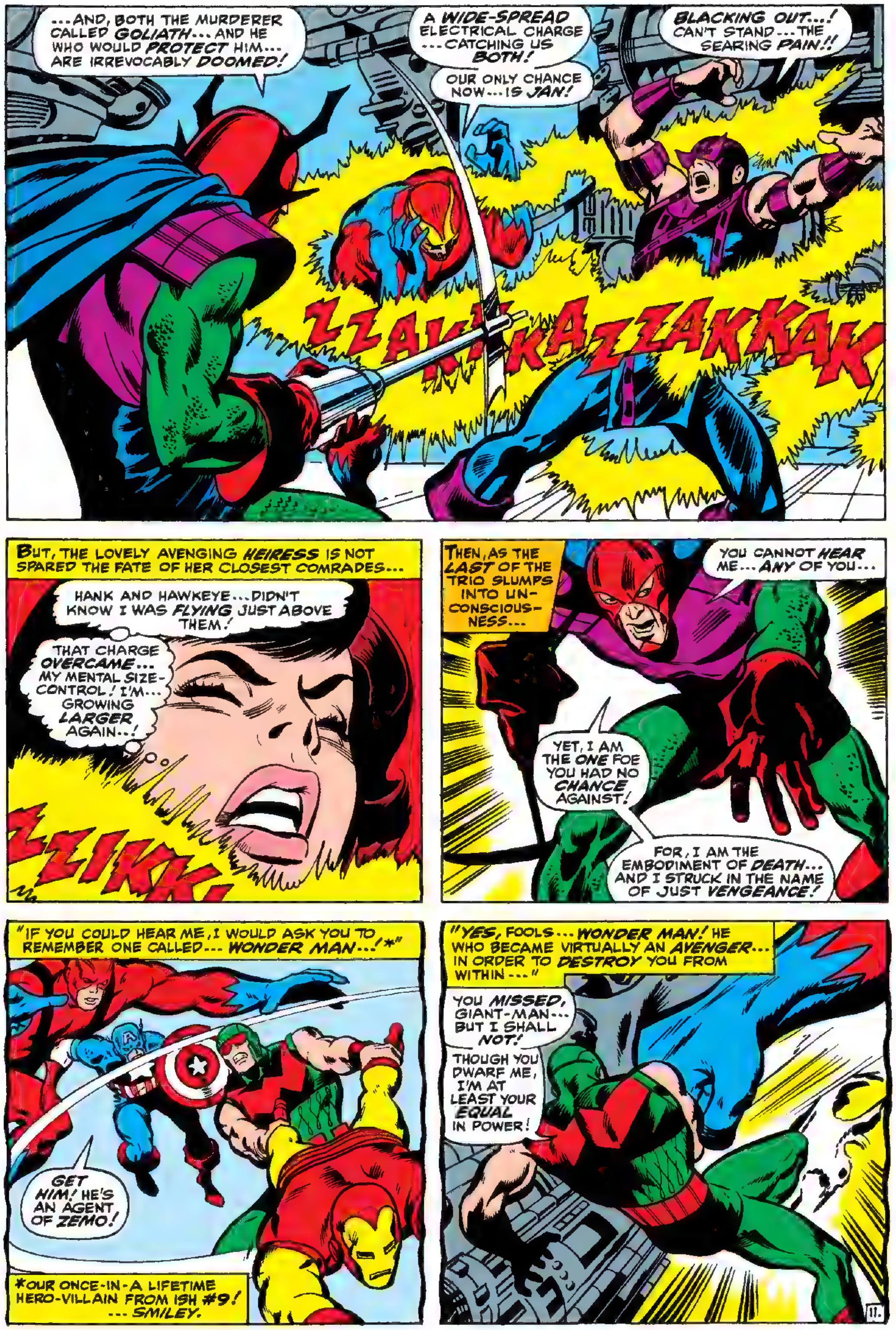
OKAY, SO YOUR MUG ISN'T ON ANY MOST-WANTED POSTERS I KNOW ABOUT!
YOU GOT ANYTHING TO BACK UP YOUR STORY TO SITWELL THAT THE AVENGERS INVITED YOU HERE, LAUGHING-BOY?
MY GIVEN NAME, INSPECTOR, IS T'CHALLA... CHIEF OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!
AND I BELIEVE I CAN PROVE MY STORY---IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME TO THAT VAULTED DOOR OVER THERE!
LEAD THE WAY, T'CHARLIE..
BUT MOVE SLOW, HEAR?
CAPTAIN AMERICA SAID THIS DOOR OPENS TO A CERTAIN COMBINATION... ONE HE GAVE ME ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO..!
THE MAIN MEETING ROOM IS BEYOND--! BUT THE COMBINATION DOESN'T WORK! THE DOOR WON'T OPEN!!
WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE!
SO NOW CAP'S YOUR ALIBI, IS HE?
IT MAY TAKE US WEEKS TO TRACK DOWN THAT GLOBE-HOPPIN' MASKED MAN!
C'MON! TELL THE REST OF IT TO THE JUDGE!
AT THAT MOMENT, A NEW AND TOTALLY UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL ENTERS... ONE TO WHOM THE SHOCKING SCENE IS PERHAPS MOST TRAGIC OF ALL...!
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS NATASHA IS... BUT SHE HAD AN AVENGERS' PRIORITY CARD!
AND NOBODY, BUT NOBODY, QUESTIONS ONE OF THOSE!
I CAME BACK FROM MY VACATION... TO FIND... THIS..!
OH, HAWKEYE... MY BELOVED... THIS CAN'T BE TRUE! IT MUSTN'T BE!
HOW COULD IT HAVE HAPPENED? HOW?
I'M AFRAID WE JUST GOT HERE, LADY!
TRY ASKIN' THAT GUY OVER THERE...
...THE ONE WITH THE GLASSES!
THEN, AFTER A BRIEF EXPLANATION BY THE YOUNG SHIELD AGENT...
NO, I... I NEVER HEARD HAWKEYE...OR ANY OF THEM... SPEAK OF ANYONE CALLED... THE PANTHER!
FORGIVE ME FOR... BEING A WOMAN, MR. SITWELL... BUT, HAWKEYE AND I HAD A QUARREL WHEN I LAST SAW HIM...
AND NOW...
DON'T APOLOGIZE, MISS!
I KNOW THERE'S NOTHING I CAN SAY...
BUT, AT LEAST WE SEEM TO HAVE... YOUR LOVED ONE'S MURDERER!
WITHIN MINUTES, THE PANTHER IS WHISKED AWAY IN A SPEEDING PATROL CAR...
IT WAS MEANT FOR ME TO BE THOUGHT THE AVENGERS' KILLER! OF THAT I'M CERTAIN!
TURNED QUIET ON US, PAL?
OR JUST THINKIN' UP SOME NEW ALIBIS?
MUST THINK THINGS THRU BEFORE I MAKE MY MOVE!
6


BUT, EVEN AS T'CHALLA THINKS, THE WORLD AT LARGE HEARS... AND JUDGES...
...HERE'S A NEWS FLASH... RECEIVED BY THIS STATION ONLY MOMENTS AGO..!
THREE OF THE FAMED AVENGERS... ARE DEAD!
A MYSTERIOUS MASKED FIGURE HAS BEEN ARRESTED AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME... A MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE PANTHER.!
HE.. HE'S KIDDIN'! HE'S GOTTA BE!
YET, IT IS SOON OBVIOUS TO STARTLED VIEWERS EVERYWHERE THAT THIS IS NO HOAX...
...I REPEAT: THE AVENGERS KNOWN AS HAWKEYE, GOLIATH, AND THE WASP ARE DEAD... APPARENTLY MURDERED..!
IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! I SAW THEM ONLY DAYS AGO... HELPED HANK PYM REGAIN HIS GROWING POWERS!
STARK LAB. INC.
MUST FINISH THESE DELICATE ADJUSTMENTS ON MY TEST-ROBOT RIGHT AWAY!..
..SO I CAN INVESTIGATE... AS IRON MAN!
ELSEWHERE, IN A DARKENED ALLEYWAY, A STAR-SPANGLED SENTINEL HEARS THE INCREDIBLE NEWS ON A CAR RADIO...
HANK... JAN... HAWKEYE... ALL KILLED IN ONE FELL SWOOP?
AND, THE PANTHER... AN ACCUSED ASSASSIN?
I JUST RETURNED FROM BATTLING THE SLEEPER... INTENDED TO VISIT THEM... WHEN I STOPPED TO BATTLE THESE PETTY THUGS!
AND NOW, THEY'RE DEAD! ---AND MY NEW-FOUND FRIEND BELIEVED GUILTY?!
WITHIN THE HOUR, A SPECIAL EDITION STOPS EVEN THE NOBLE GOD OF THUNDER...
THEIRS WERE THE SPIRITS THAT KEPT THE NAME OF THE AVENGERS ALIVE...
...TILL THEY THEMSELVES WERE... NO MORE!
EXTRA DAILY
3 AVENGERS MURDERED!
WOULD THAT THIS DREAD NIGHT HAD NE'ER FALLEN!
HOWEVER, SOMEWHERE IN THE STUNNED CITY, ONE VOICE THERE IS WHICH IS RAISED IN EXULTANT TRIUMPH...
MY PLAN SUCCEEDED... TO THE FINAL DETAIL!
THAT WHICH HAS BEEN DULY SOWN, SHALL NOW BE HARVESTED, BY THE MAN WHO KILLED THE TRIO OF AVENGERS...
I... THE GRIM REAPER!!
7.

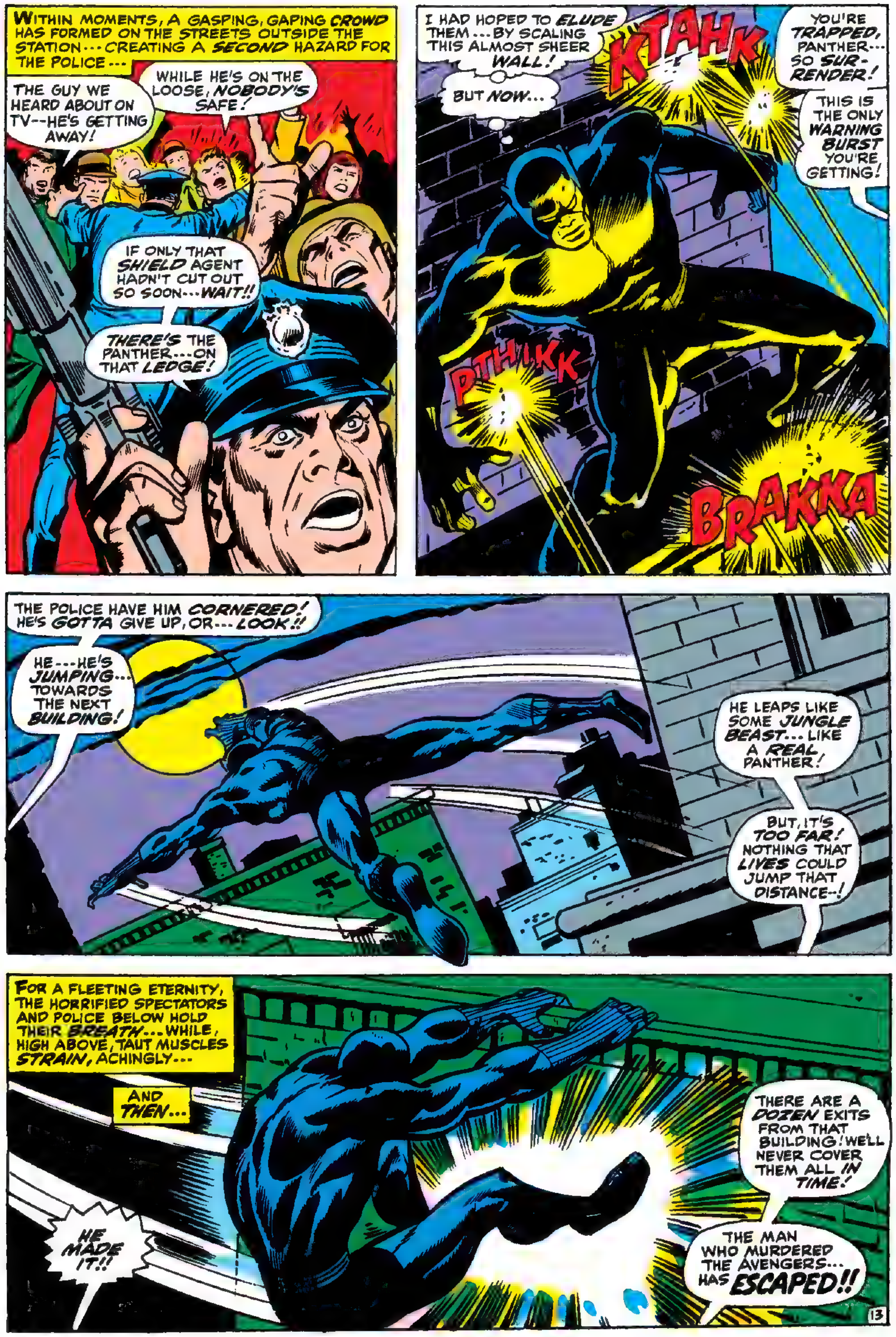
FOR THE PRESENT, IT SUITS MY SCHEME THAT THE LUCKLESS PANTHER BE THOUGHT THE MURDERER ---FOR, THOSE THREE DEATHS ARE ONLY THE FIRST I SHALL ACCOMPLISH!
AND, THE SUPREME IRONY OF ALL IS THAT THE TRUE MURDERERS SHALL BE... THE AUTHORITIES THEMSELVES...
...IN A WAY THAT THEY CAN SCARCELY IMAGINE!!
THEN, AS A STARTLED NATION GRIEVES... AND AS THE PREVIOUS PANEL'S ENIGMATIC WORDS YET RING IN OUR EARS ...THE VENEMOUS GRIM REAPER LETS HIS THOUGHTS STRAY BACK A MERE HOUR IN TIME...
THERE IS THE HATED BUILDING WHICH I SEEK... DIRECTLY BELOW!
MY ATTACK MUST BE SUDDEN... SWIFT... TOTALLY UNEXPECTED!
AND, IT MUST BEGIN... NOW!
IN HIS MIND'S EYE, HE SEES A HEAVILY REINFORCED WALL LOOM BEFORE HIS JET-EQUIPPED PLATFORM... RELIVES AGAIN THE MOMENT WHEN HE LIFTED HIS WEIRD, OMINOUS SCYTHE, AND...
SHOOOM!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...??
SOMEBODY... JUST BLASTED A KING-SIZE HOLE... IN OUR WALL!
BUT... WE'RE SEVERAL STORIES HIGH..!
THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, FOOLS... MY SECOND MOST POTENT WEAPON!
THE OTHER YOU SHALL LEARN IN A MOMENT...
...WHEN THE GRIM REAPER WREAKS HIS AWESOME VENGEANCE!
VENGEANCE? YOU MUST BE SOME KIND'A FULL-TIME PSYCHO!
NONE OF US EVER LAID EYES ON YOU BEFORE!
GOTTA STALL 'IM FOR A FEW SECONDS!
HANK AND JAN WERE HIT HARDER BY THE EXPLOSION THAN I WAS... AND NEED A CHANCE TO RECOVER!


YOU ARE NOTHING TO ME, ARCHER! IT IS THE OTHER TWO I WANT!
THEREFORE, I SHALL PUT YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY QUICKLY...WITH ONE BOLD STROKE!!
AND, HE ALMOST DID!
WHRAAK!
THIS GUY KNOWS HOW TO SWING THAT SCYTHE!
BAH! NO MERE AMATEURISH ACROBATICS WILL SAVE YOU FROM THE GRIM REAPER!
WE HEARD YOUR NAME ALREADY, MELVIN!
BRAZZT!
JUST BE SURE AN' SIGN OUR GUEST BOOK.. ON YOUR WAY OUT!
SHEESH! THAT THING EVEN FIRES ELECTRIC BEAMS!
ONE INCH CLOSER, AND WE'D BE HAVIN' TOASTED BOW-SLINGER!
YOU'VE DONE YOUR BIT, HAWKEYE!
NOW, LET OL' HIGH-POCKETS HAVE A WHIRL!
GOLIATH!!
WATCH OUT FOR THAT PIG-STICKER OF HIS, MAN-MOUNTAIN!
I'M BETTIN' IT'S GOT MORE GIZMOS THAN I'VE GOT ARROWS!
YOU WERE EXPECTING MAYBE LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS?
DON'T WORRY, LITTLE BUDDY!
I'VE FOUGHT THIS KIND BEFORE...AND ALWAYS COME OUT ON TOP!
THAT YOU HAVE, HENRY PYM... BY COMMITTING THE TREACHEROUS DEEDS OF A PROVEN MURDERER!!
HAH! YOU ARE STARTLED TO HEAR YOURSELF CALLED BY THAT NAME YOU SO RICHLY DESERVE!
AND, THAT SINGLE MOMENT OF HESITATION IS ALL I NEED... TO ESCAPE YOUR OVERRATED GRASP!
9.

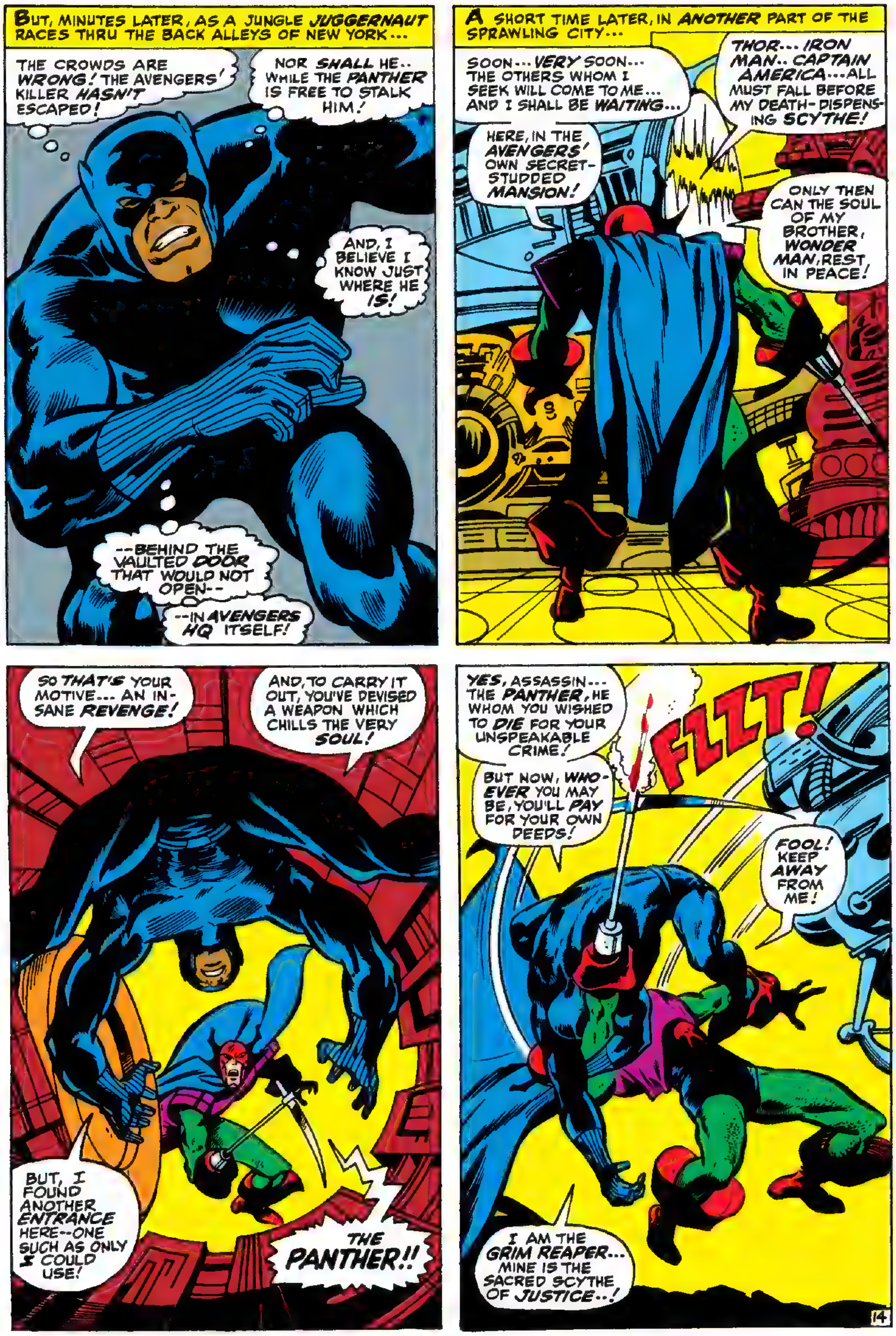
YOU SEE, GOLIATH? THE GRIM REAPER IS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD!
WHO WOULD HAVE EXPECTED A MERE SCYTHE TO SPIN SO SWIFTLY THAT IT MOMENTARILY BECOMES A PROPELLOR?
WHIRRRR!
...A PROPELLOR WHICH SLASHES THRU THE VERY CEILING OVERHEAD...GIVING ME ROOM TO FIRE AT YOU!
THAT GADGET WON'T HOLD YOU ALOFT FOR LONG, FELLA...
AND, WHEN YOU COME DOWN...
WHEN HE COMES DOWN, IT'S HAWKEYE'S TURN AT BAT AGAIN, TALL-SOCKS!
WH..?? IT'S STILL SPINNIN' SO FAST, MY ARROWS CAN'T GET THRU!
KAK
KAKKA
KAK
DO YOU THINK I WOULD DARE BEARD YOU IN YOUR VERY LAIR, CLOWN...
...IF I HAD NOT SPENT LONG MONTHS IN PREPARATION...TO ASSURE MY REVENGE OF SUCCESS?
REVENGE? REVENGE ON WHO, YOU MADMAN... AND FOR WHAT?
SPARE ME YOUR PROTESTATIONS OF INNOCENCE, ALL OF YOU!
HIS ARMOR PROTECTS HIM FROM MY WASP'S STINGS...BUT MAYBE I CAN DISTRACT HIM..!
I HAVE ALREADY TRIED YOU...FOUND YOU GUILTY!
ALL THAT REMAINS... IS YOUR EXECUTION!
THAK!
DUCK, PARTNER!
I HEAR YA TALKIN'!
NOW, LET'S TAKE THAT NUT... TOGETHER!
SUDDENLY, A HOARSE, ALMOST MANIACAL LAUGH FILLS THE COMPUTER-STUDDED CHAMBER---
TOGETHER? THAT'S JUST HOW I WANTED YOU, FOOLS!
NOW, A MERE TOUCH OF THIS STUD ON MY DEATH-DEALING SCYTHE, AND...
10

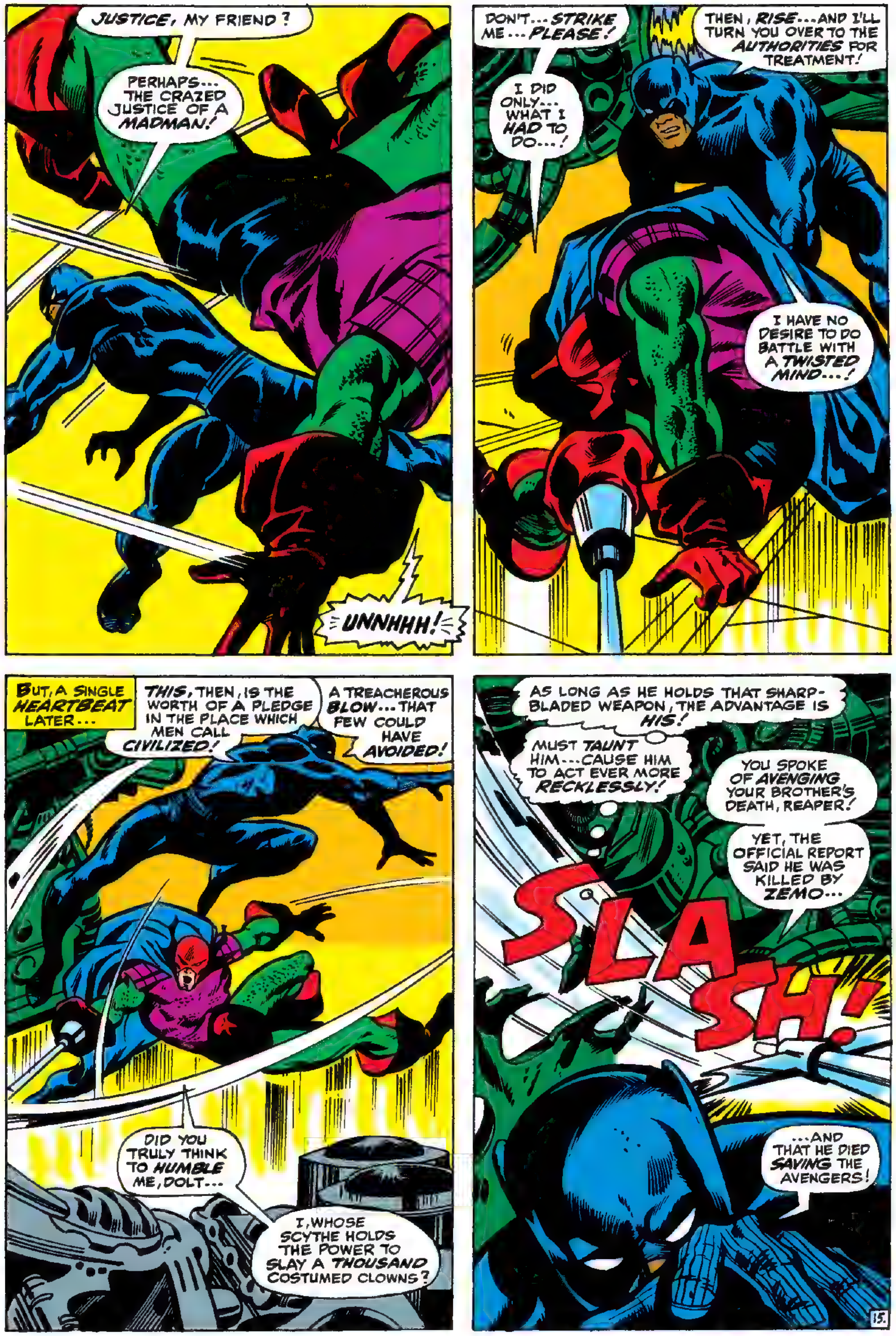

...AND, BOTH THE MURDERER CALLED GOLIATH... AND HE WHO WOULD PROTECT HIM... ARE IRREVOCABLY DOOMED!
A WIDE-SPREAD ELECTRICAL CHARGE ...CATCHING US BOTH!
OUR ONLY CHANCE NOW... IS JAN!
BLACKING OUT...! CAN'T STAND... THE SEARING PAIN!!
ZZAKKKAZZZAKKKAK
BUT, THE LOVELY AVENGING HEIRESS IS NOT SPARED THE FATE OF HER CLOSEST COMRADES...
HANK AND HAWKEYE... DIDN'T KNOW I WAS FLYING JUST ABOVE THEM!
THAT CHARGE OVERCAME... MY MENTAL SIZE-CONTROL! I'M... GROWING LARGER AGAIN...!
ZZIKK
THEN, AS THE LAST OF THE TRIO SLUMPS INTO UN-CONSCIOUS-NESS...
YOU CANNOT HEAR ME... ANY OF YOU...
YET, I AM THE ONE FOE YOU HAD NO CHANCE AGAINST!
FOR, I AM THE EMBODIMENT OF DEATH... AND I STRUCK IN THE NAME OF JUST VENGEANCE!
"IF YOU COULD HEAR ME, I WOULD ASK YOU TO REMEMBER ONE CALLED... WONDER MAN...!*"
GET HIM! HE'S AN AGENT OF ZEMO!
*OUR ONCE-IN-A LIFETIME HERO-VILLAIN FROM ISH #9! ---SMILEY.
"YES, FOOLS... WONDER MAN! HE WHO BECAME VIRTUALLY AN AVENGER... IN ORDER TO DESTROY YOU FROM WITHIN..."
YOU MISSED, GIANT-MAN... BUT I SHALL NOT!
THOUGH YOU DWARF ME, I'M AT LEAST YOUR EQUAL IN POWER!
11.

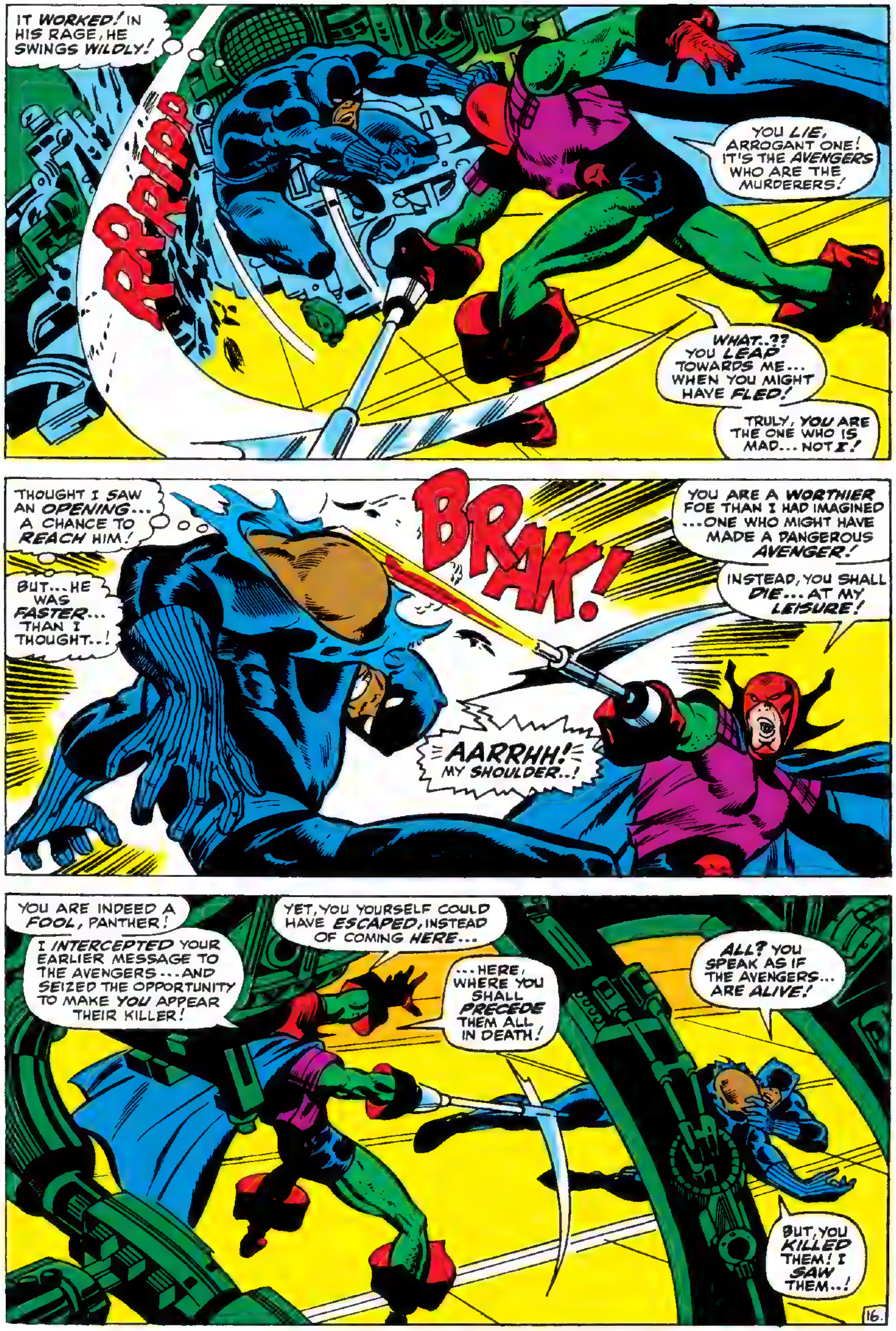
"IN EVERY WAY, HE PROVED MIGHTIER THAN THE ONES WHO OPPOSED HIM! YET, BY SOME TRICKERY, HE WAS DEFEATED... POISONED!"
"AND THOSE WHO CALLED THEMSELVES AVENGERS STOOD BY AND WATCHED HIM DIE... AND DID NOTHING TO SAVE HIM..."
"THIS I KNOW, FOR SIMON WILLIAMS... WONDER MAN... WAS MY BROTHER!"
THE NEXT MOMENT, ALL THE VENEMOUS RANCOR IN HIS SOUL POURED OUT, THE GRIM REAPER GESTURES ONCE MORE WITH HIS MYSTERIOUS SCYTHE, AND...
THAT WHICH MY WEAPON HAS DONE, IT CAN UNDO!
ITS ELECTRICAL POWER SHALL NOW RESTORE THIS CHAMBER!
FOR, I HAVE PLANS IN MIND... PLANS THAT SHALL DESTROY THE OTHERS WHO LET MY BROTHER DIE...!
HOWEVER, WE'LL HAVE TO LET THE TANGLED SKEIN OF FATE REMAIN TWISTED A BIT LONGER... AS, RETURNING TO THE PRESENT--
IF HE'S REALLY AN AFRICAN PRINCE LIKE HE SAYS, WE CAN'T BOOK HIM!
THIS'D BE A JOB FOR THE U.N.!
SURE... BUT WE'VE GOT JUST HIS WORD ON THAT!
I CAN'T FIND THIS WAKANDA PLACE ON ANY MAP!
NOR SHALL HE... FOR ITS LOCATION IS SECRET!
BUT, I'VE ACCOMPLISHED MY PURPOSE IN ALLOWING MYSELF TO BE BROUGHT HERE...
AND NOW, IT IS TIME FOR THE PANTHER TO PROWL THE CITY ONCE MORE...
...TO LEARN IF THE GNAWING SUSPICION WHICH FILLS MY MIND... IS THE SENSES-STAGGERING TRUTH!
KRASH!
HE'S MAKING A BREAK FOR IT!
AND HE MOVES LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING!
12

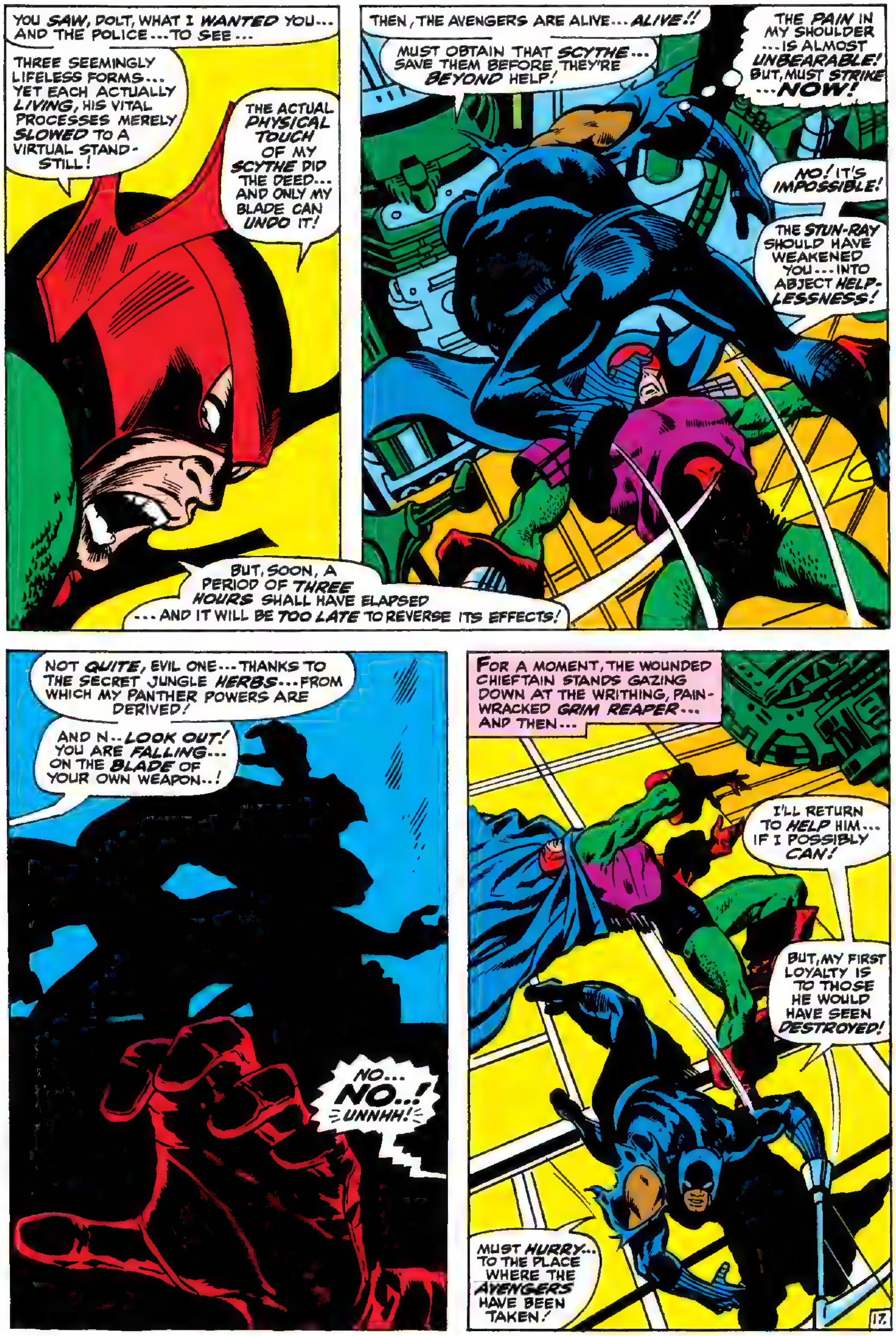


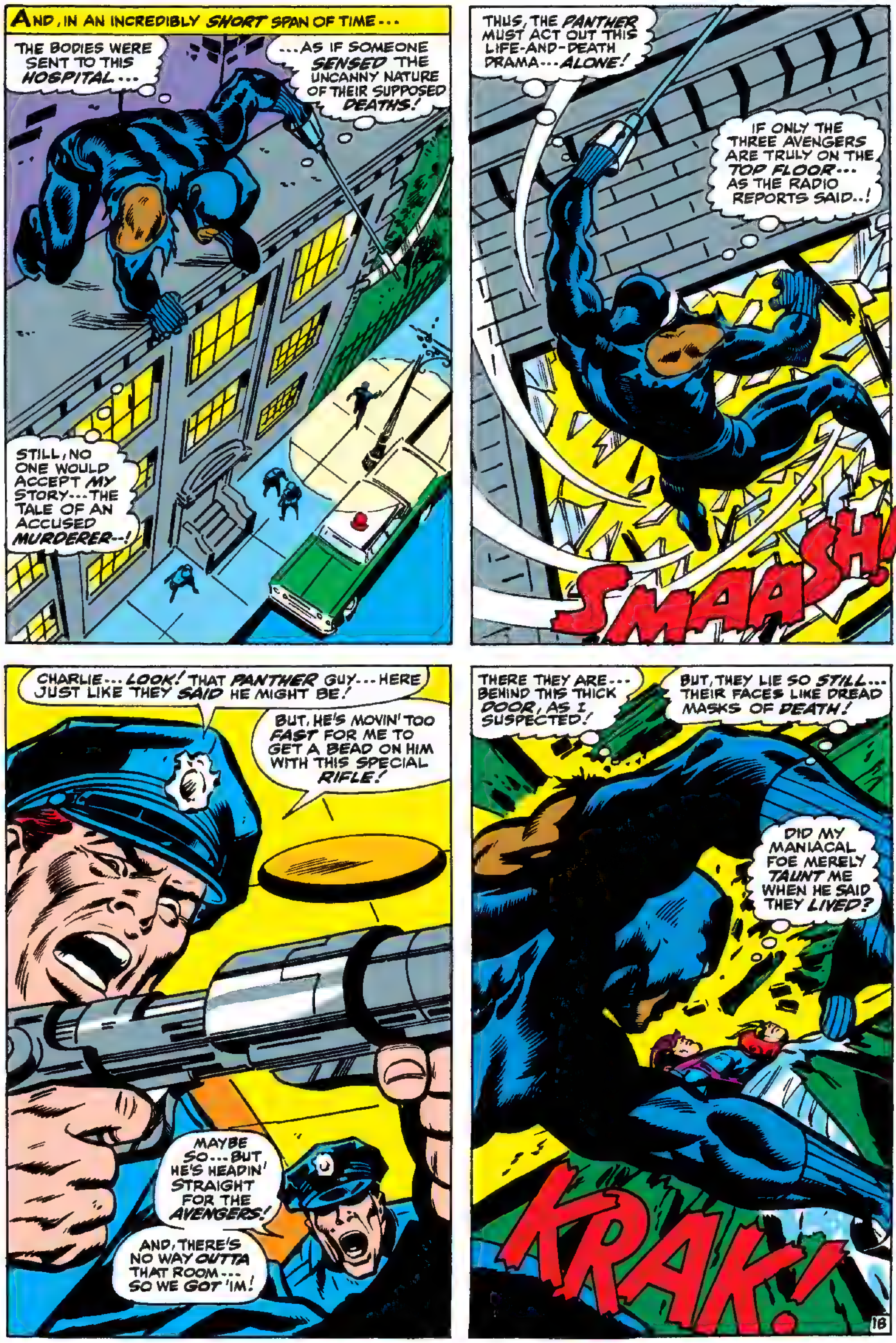
WITHIN MOMENTS, A GASPING, GAPING CROWD HAS FORMED ON THE STREETS OUTSIDE THE STATION··· CREATING A SECOND HAZARD FOR THE POLICE···
THE GUY WE HEARD ABOUT ON TV--HE'S GETTING AWAY!
WHILE HE'S ON THE LOOSE, NOBODY'S SAFE!
IF ONLY THAT SHIELD AGENT HADN'T CUT OUT SO SOON···WAIT!!
THERE'S THE PANTHER···ON THAT LEDGE!
I HAD HOPED TO ELUDE THEM ··· BY SCALING THIS ALMOST SHEER WALL!
BUT NOW···
KTAHK
YOU'RE TRAPPED, PANTHER··· SO SUR-RENDER!
THIS IS THE ONLY WARNING BURST YOU'RE GETTING!
PTHIKK
BRAKKA
THE POLICE HAVE HIM CORNERED! HE'S GOTTA GIVE UP, OR··· LOOK!!
HE···HE'S JUMPING··· TOWARDS THE NEXT BUILDING!
HE LEAPS LIKE SOME JUNGLE BEAST··· LIKE A REAL PANTHER!
BUT, IT'S TOO FAR! NOTHING THAT LIVES COULD JUMP THAT DISTANCE--!
FOR A FLEETING ETERNITY, THE HORRIFIED SPECTATORS AND POLICE BELOW HOLD THEIR BREATH···WHILE, HIGH ABOVE, TAUT MUSCLES STRAIN, ACHINGLY···
AND THEN···
HE MADE IT!!
THERE ARE A DOZEN EXITS FROM THAT BUILDING! WE'LL NEVER COVER THEM ALL IN TIME!
THE MAN WHO MURDERED THE AVENGERS··· HAS ESCAPED!!
13


BUT, MINUTES LATER, AS A JUNGLE JUGGERNAUT RACES THRU THE BACK ALLEYS OF NEW YORK...
THE CROWDS ARE WRONG! THE AVENGERS' KILLER HASN'T ESCAPED!
NOR SHALL HE.. WHILE THE PANTHER IS FREE TO STALK HIM!
AND, I BELIEVE I KNOW JUST WHERE HE IS!
--BEHIND THE VAULTED DOOR THAT WOULD NOT OPEN--
--IN AVENGERS HQ ITSELF!
A SHORT TIME LATER, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE SPRAWLING CITY...
SOON... VERY SOON... THE OTHERS WHOM I SEEK WILL COME TO ME... AND I SHALL BE WAITING...
THOR... IRON MAN.. CAPTAIN AMERICA... ALL MUST FALL BEFORE MY DEATH-DISPENSING SCYTHE!
HERE, IN THE AVENGERS' OWN SECRET-STUDDED MANSION!
ONLY THEN CAN THE SOUL OF MY BROTHER, WONDER MAN, REST IN PEACE!
SO THAT'S YOUR MOTIVE... AN INSANE REVENGE!
AND, TO CARRY IT OUT, YOU'VE DEVISED A WEAPON WHICH CHILLS THE VERY SOUL!
BUT, I FOUND ANOTHER ENTRANCE HERE--ONE SUCH AS ONLY I COULD USE!
THE PANTHER!!
YES, ASSASSIN... THE PANTHER, HE WHOM YOU WISHED TO DIE FOR YOUR UNSPEAKABLE CRIME!
BUT NOW, WHOEVER YOU MAY BE, YOU'LL PAY FOR YOUR OWN DEEDS!
FZZT!
FOOL! KEEP AWAY FROM ME!
I AM THE GRIM REAPER... MINE IS THE SACRED SCYTHE OF JUSTICE..!
14


JUSTICE, MY FRIEND?
PERHAPS... THE CRAZED JUSTICE OF A MADMAN!
UNNHHH!
DON'T... STRIKE ME... PLEASE!
I DID ONLY... WHAT I HAD TO DO...!
THEN, RISE... AND I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE AUTHORITIES FOR TREATMENT!
I HAVE NO DESIRE TO DO BATTLE WITH A TWISTED MIND...!
BUT, A SINGLE HEARTBEAT LATER...
THIS, THEN, IS THE WORTH OF A PLEDGE IN THE PLACE WHICH MEN CALL CIVILIZED!
A TREACHEROUS BLOW... THAT FEW COULD HAVE AVOIDED!
DID YOU TRULY THINK TO HUMBLE ME, DOLT...
I, WHOSE SCYTHE HOLDS THE POWER TO SLAY A THOUSAND COSTUMED CLOWNS?
AS LONG AS HE HOLDS THAT SHARP-BLADED WEAPON, THE ADVANTAGE IS HIS!
MUST TAUNT HIM... CAUSE HIM TO ACT EVER MORE RECKLESSLY!
YOU SPOKE OF AVENGING YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH, REAPER!
YET, THE OFFICIAL REPORT SAID HE WAS KILLED BY ZEMO...
SLASH!
...AND THAT HE DIED SAVING THE AVENGERS!
15.


IT WORKED! IN HIS RAGE, HE SWINGS WILDLY!
RRRIPP
YOU LIE, ARROGANT ONE! IT'S THE AVENGERS WHO ARE THE MURDERERS!
WHAT..?? YOU LEAP TOWARDS ME... WHEN YOU MIGHT HAVE FLED!
TRULY, YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS MAD... NOT I!
THOUGHT I SAW AN OPENING... A CHANCE TO REACH HIM!
BUT... HE WAS FASTER... THAN I THOUGHT..!
BRAK!
YOU ARE A WORTHIER FOE THAN I HAD IMAGINED ...ONE WHO MIGHT HAVE MADE A DANGEROUS AVENGER!
INSTEAD, YOU SHALL DIE... AT MY LEISURE!
AARRHH! MY SHOULDER..!
YOU ARE INDEED A FOOL, PANTHER!
I INTERCEPTED YOUR EARLIER MESSAGE TO THE AVENGERS... AND SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOU APPEAR THEIR KILLER!
YET, YOU YOURSELF COULD HAVE ESCAPED, INSTEAD OF COMING HERE...
...HERE, WHERE YOU SHALL PRECEDE THEM ALL IN DEATH!
ALL? YOU SPEAK AS IF THE AVENGERS... ARE ALIVE!
BUT, YOU KILLED THEM! I SAW THEM..!
16.

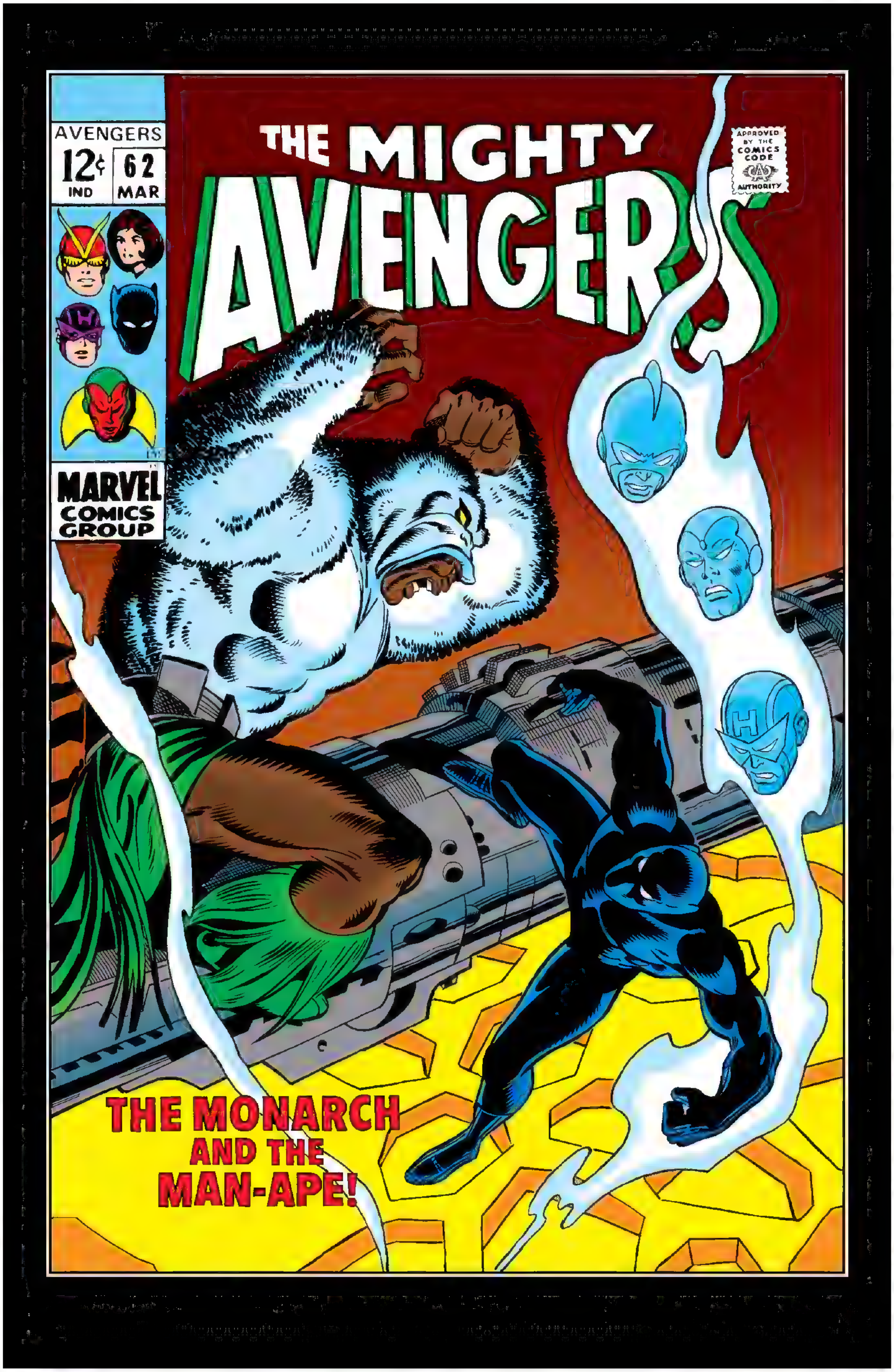

YOU SAW, DOLT, WHAT I WANTED YOU... AND THE POLICE... TO SEE...
THREE SEEMINGLY LIFELESS FORMS... YET EACH ACTUALLY LIVING, HIS VITAL PROCESSES MERELY SLOWED TO A VIRTUAL STAND-STILL!
THE ACTUAL PHYSICAL TOUCH OF MY SCYTHE DID THE DEED... AND ONLY MY BLADE CAN UNDO IT!
BUT, SOON, A PERIOD OF THREE HOURS SHALL HAVE ELAPSED ...AND IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO REVERSE ITS EFFECTS!
THEN, THE AVENGERS ARE ALIVE... ALIVE!!
MUST OBTAIN THAT SCYTHE... SAVE THEM BEFORE THEY'RE BEYOND HELP!
THE PAIN IN MY SHOULDER ...IS ALMOST UNBEARABLE! BUT, MUST STRIKE ...NOW!
NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
THE STUN-RAY SHOULD HAVE WEAKENED YOU... INTO ABJECT HELP-LESSNESS!
NOT QUITE, EVIL ONE... THANKS TO THE SECRET JUNGLE HERBS... FROM WHICH MY PANTHER POWERS ARE DERIVED!
AND N-- LOOK OUT! YOU ARE FALLING... ON THE BLADE OF YOUR OWN WEAPON..!
NO... NO..! UNNHH!
FOR A MOMENT, THE WOUNDED CHIEFTAIN STANDS GAZING DOWN AT THE WRITHING, PAIN-WRACKED GRIM REAPER... AND THEN...
I'LL RETURN TO HELP HIM... IF I POSSIBLY CAN!
BUT, MY FIRST LOYALTY IS TO THOSE HE WOULD HAVE SEEN DESTROYED!
MUST HURRY... TO THE PLACE WHERE THE AVENGERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN!
17



AND, IN AN INCREDIBLY SHORT SPAN OF TIME...
THE BODIES WERE SENT TO THIS HOSPITAL...
...AS IF SOMEONE SENSED THE UNCANNY NATURE OF THEIR SUPPOSED DEATHS!
STILL, NO ONE WOULD ACCEPT MY STORY---THE TALE OF AN ACCUSED MURDERER--!
THUS, THE PANTHER MUST ACT OUT THIS LIFE-AND-DEATH DRAMA---ALONE!
IF ONLY THE THREE AVENGERS ARE TRULY ON THE TOP FLOOR--- AS THE RADIO REPORTS SAID..!
SMAASH!
CHARLIE--- LOOK! THAT PANTHER GUY--- HERE JUST LIKE THEY SAID HE MIGHT BE!
BUT, HE'S MOVIN' TOO FAST FOR ME TO GET A BEAD ON HIM WITH THIS SPECIAL RIFLE!
MAYBE SO... BUT HE'S HEADIN' STRAIGHT FOR THE AVENGERS!
AND, THERE'S NO WAY OUTTA THAT ROOM--- SO WE GOT 'IM!
THERE THEY ARE--- BEHIND THIS THICK DOOR, AS I SUSPECTED!
BUT, THEY LIE SO STILL--- THEIR FACES LIKE DREAD MASKS OF DEATH!
DID MY MANIACAL FOE MERELY TAUNT ME WHEN HE SAID THEY LIVED?
KRAK!
18

HE CAN'T ESCAPE NOW!
WHY'D HE COME BACK...TO CERTAIN DEATH?
WHO CARES? THE IMPORTANT THING IS...HE'S TRAPPED!
BUT, WHAT'S HE DOING WITH THAT NUTTY BLADE?
THAK!
I ONLY HOPE I'VE GUESSED CORRECTLY... AND THAT THIS ELECTRICAL CHARGE WILL NEUTRALIZE THE SCYTHE'S DEATH-DEALING EFFECTS!
IF I'M WRONG, WE SHALL ALL HAVE DIED IN VAIN...
...AND THE GRIM REAPER SHALL HAVE GAINED HIS MADDENED VENGEANCE!
BRAKKA
THE NEXT MOMENT, HIS POWERS DRAINED AT LAST BY HIS THROBBING SHOULDER, THE PANTHER LURCHES TO A STOP...
NOW WE'VE GOT 'IM! LET 'IM HAVE IT--!
HEY! WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES--??
WIK!
THWOK!
SKRAK!
AN ARROW... SPLINTERING MY PISTOL!
BUT, ONLY ONE PERSON CAN SHOOT LIKE THAT, AND HE'S...
DEAD? DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT, BLUE BOYS!
WE'VE BEEN ALIVE ALL ALONG-- BUT, TILL NOW, WE COULDN'T MOVE!
THEN, THOSE ELECTRICAL BURSTS AWAKENED YOU... ALMOST INSTANTLY!
BUT HOW..?
WE'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE DETAILS...
AS SOON AS WE'RE SURE OF THEM OURSELVES!
RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A WOUNDED RESCUER TO TAKE CARE OF..!
19.

T'Challa's adventures with the Avengers continue, including a battle with Doctor Strange against the Ice Giant Ymir that brings them to Wakanda...


AVENGERS
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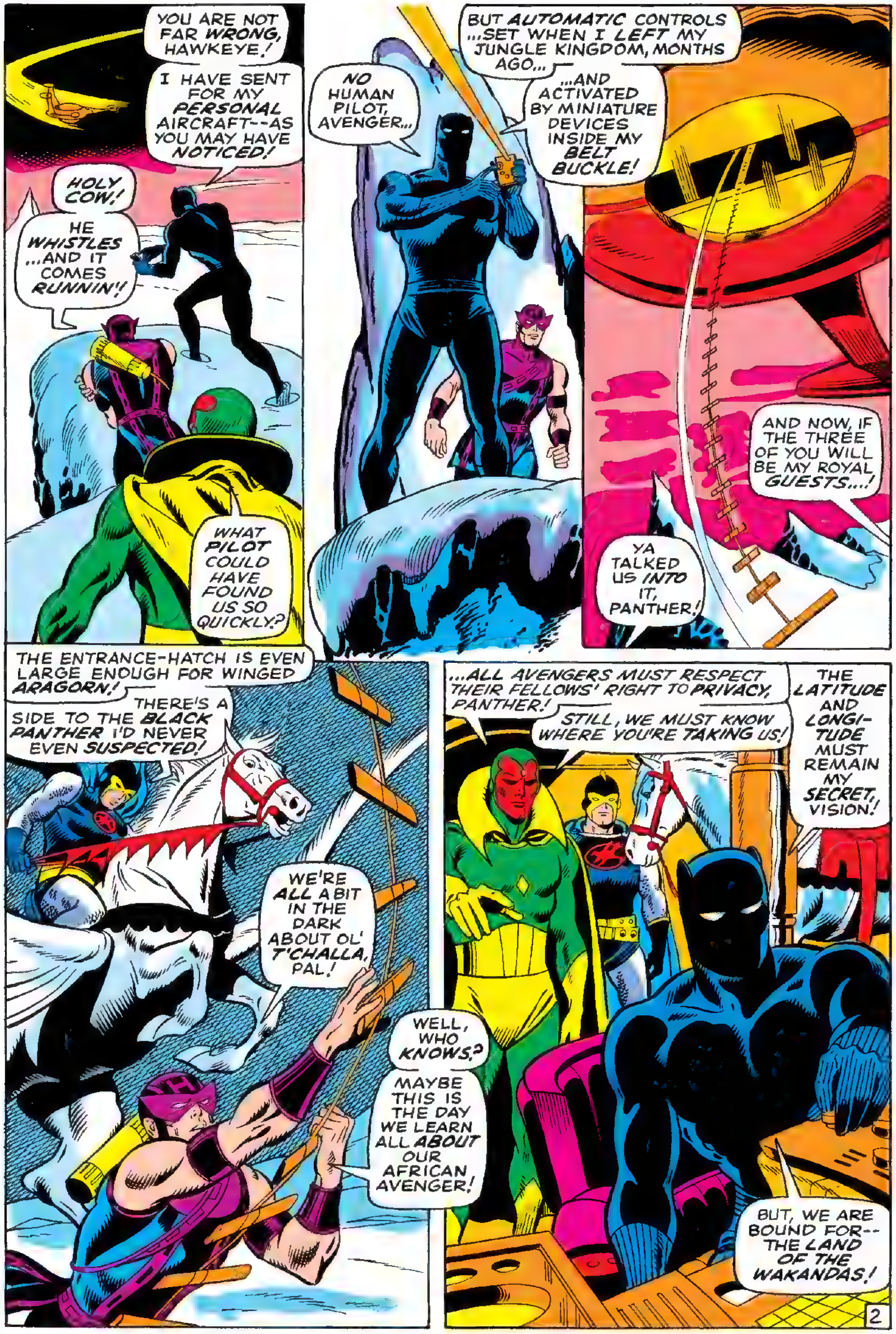
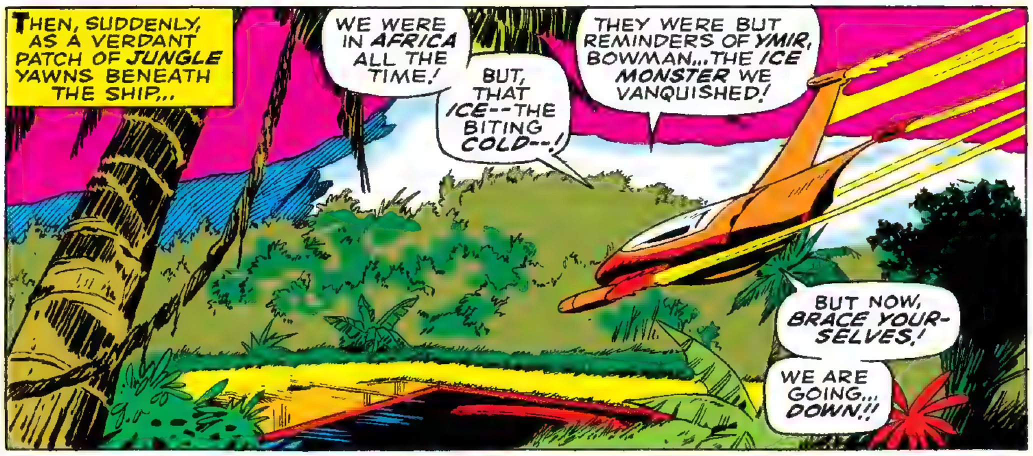
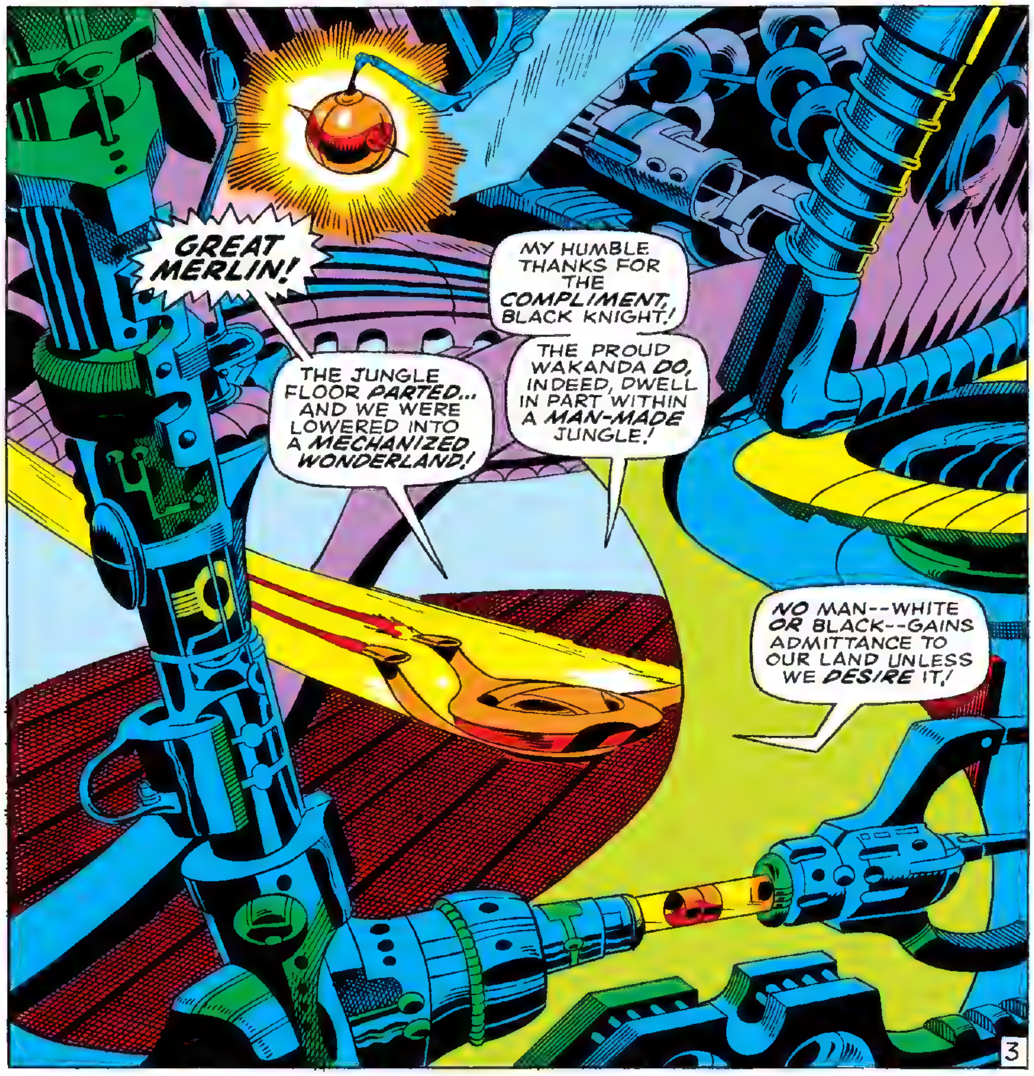
62
IND
MAR
THE MIGHTY
AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE MONARCH AND THE MAN-APE!

Stan Lee EDITOR
Roy Thomas WRITER
John Buscema ARTIST
INKED BY GEORGE KLEIN
LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK
THE DANGER IS ENDED!
THANKS TO DR. STRANGE, THE WORLD HAS SURVIVED THE DOUBLE PERIL OF FIRE AND ICE!*
BUT THE MYSTIC HAS VANISHED... LEAVING US IN THIS PLACE OF FIERCE, FREEZING COLD!
YOU SHOULD TALK, VISION!
I'M THE ONE HAD TO BURN HIS OWN ARROWS!
SOON, YOU'LL NOT NEED THIS FIRE TO WARM YOU, MY FRIEND!
YEAH? WHY NOT?
YOU PLANNIN' TO FLY US ALL TO THE BAHAMAS ON YOUR MAGIC CARPET?
"THE MONARCH AND THE MAN-APE!"
*IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN LAST ISH'S TITANIC TALE, NEVER MIND-- IT'LL COME BACK TO YOU! --STAN.

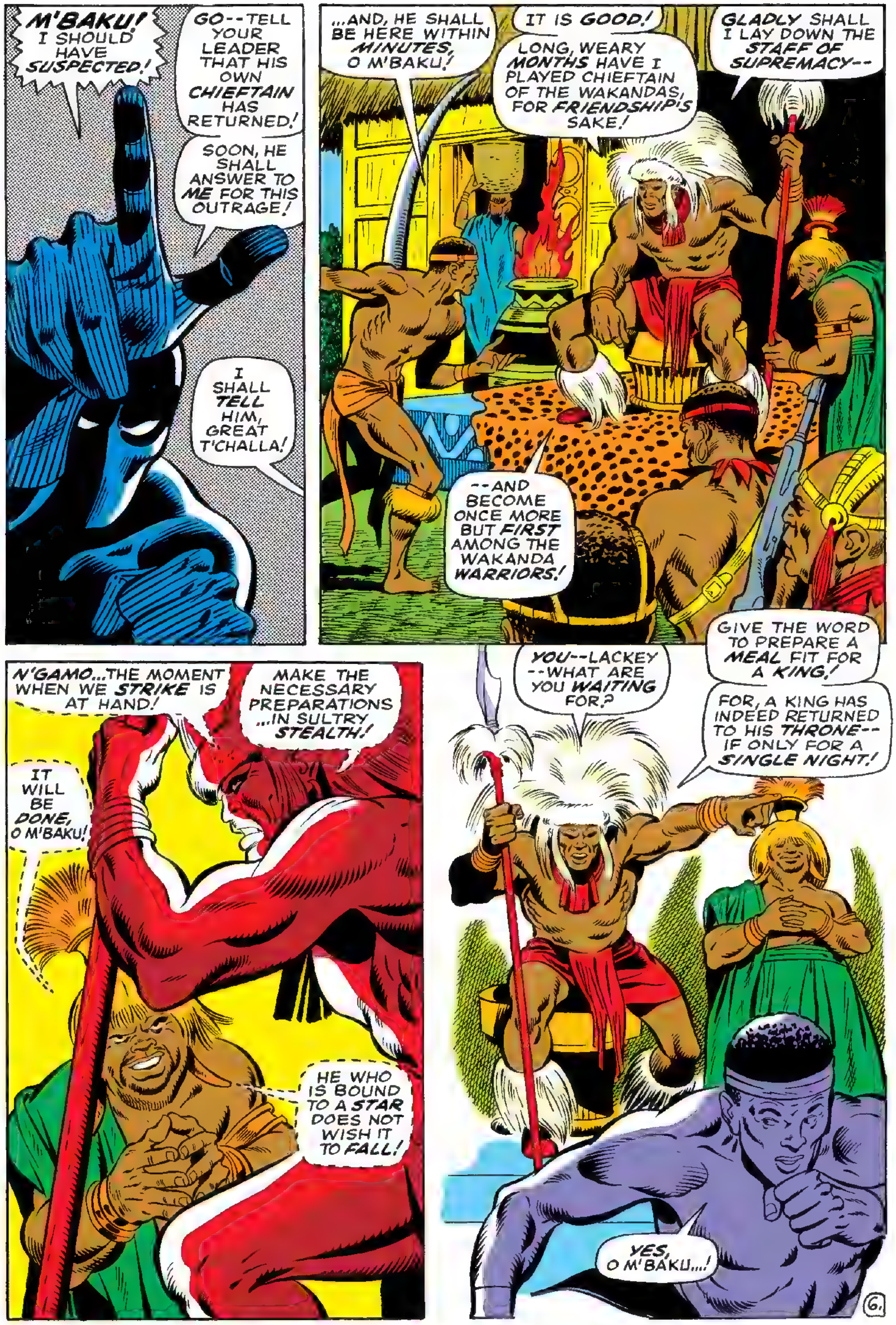

YOU ARE NOT FAR WRONG, HAWKEYE!
I HAVE SENT FOR MY PERSONAL AIRCRAFT--AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED!
HOLY COW!
HE WHISTLES ...AND IT COMES RUNNIN'!
WHAT PILOT COULD HAVE FOUND US SO QUICKLY?
NO HUMAN PILOT, AVENGER...
BUT AUTOMATIC CONTROLS ...SET WHEN I LEFT MY JUNGLE KINGDOM, MONTHS AGO...
...AND ACTIVATED BY MINIATURE DEVICES INSIDE MY BELT BUCKLE!
AND NOW, IF THE THREE OF YOU WILL BE MY ROYAL GUESTS....!
YA TALKED US INTO IT, PANTHER!
THE ENTRANCE-HATCH IS EVEN LARGE ENOUGH FOR WINGED ARAGORN!
THERE'S A SIDE TO THE BLACK PANTHER I'D NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED!
WE'RE ALL A BIT IN THE DARK ABOUT OL' T'CHALLA, PAL!
WELL, WHO KNOWS?
MAYBE THIS IS THE DAY WE LEARN ALL ABOUT OUR AFRICAN AVENGER!
...ALL AVENGERS MUST RESPECT THEIR FELLOWS' RIGHT TO PRIVACY, PANTHER!
STILL, WE MUST KNOW WHERE YOU'RE TAKING US!
THE LATITUDE AND LONGI-TUDE MUST REMAIN MY SECRET, VISION!
BUT, WE ARE BOUND FOR-- THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS!
2

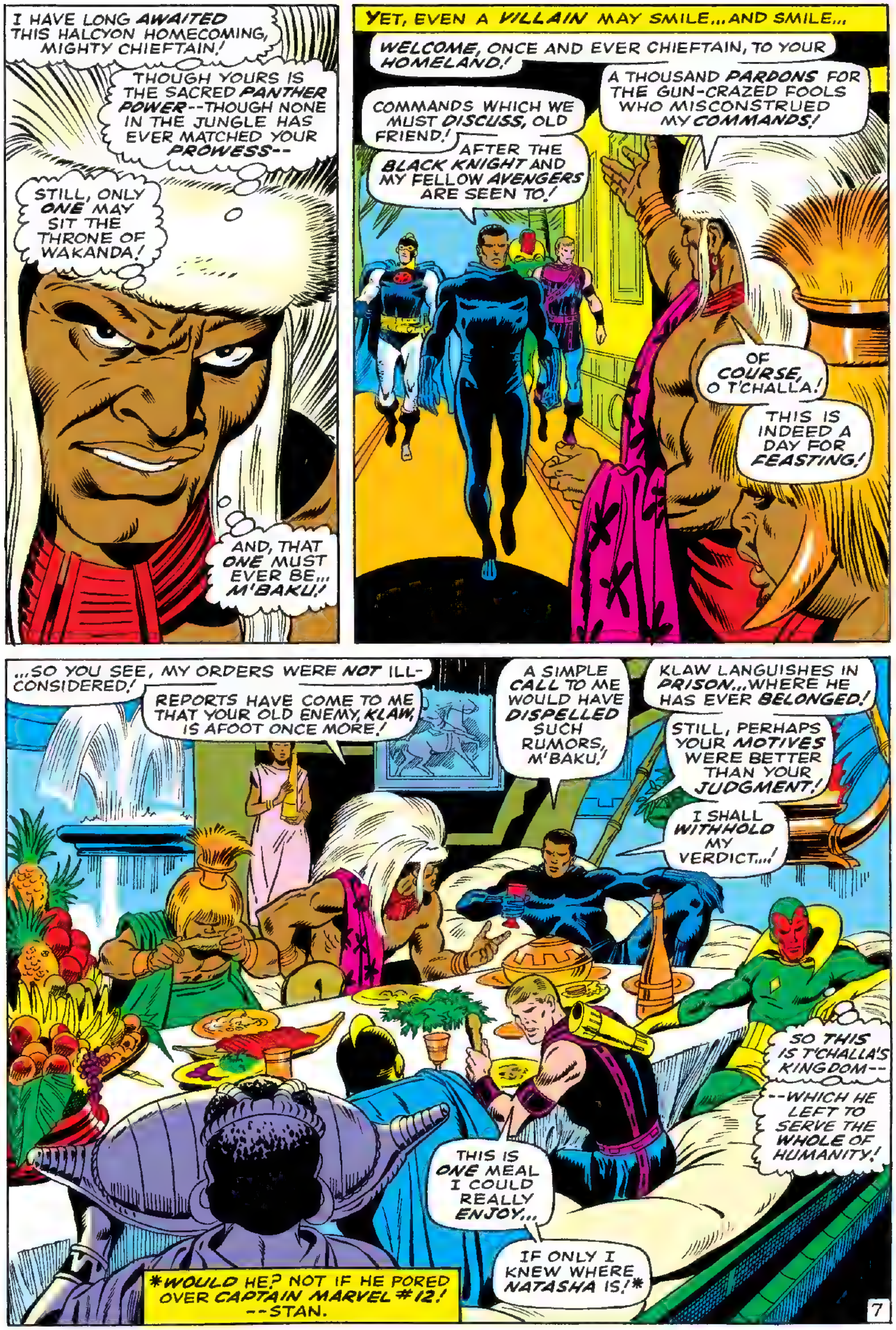

THEN, SUDDENLY, AS A VERDANT PATCH OF JUNGLE YAWNS BENEATH THE SHIP...
WE WERE IN AFRICA ALL THE TIME!
BUT, THAT ICE--THE BITING COLD--!
THEY WERE BUT REMINDERS OF YMIR, BOWMAN...THE ICE MONSTER WE VANQUISHED!
BUT NOW, BRACE YOURSELVES!
WE ARE GOING... DOWN!!


GREAT MERLIN!
THE JUNGLE FLOOR PARTED... AND WE WERE LOWERED INTO A MECHANIZED WONDERLAND!
MY HUMBLE THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT, BLACK KNIGHT!
THE PROUD WAKANDA DO, INDEED, DWELL IN PART WITHIN A MAN-MADE JUNGLE!
NO MAN--WHITE OR BLACK--GAINS ADMITTANCE TO OUR LAND UNLESS WE DESIRE IT!
3

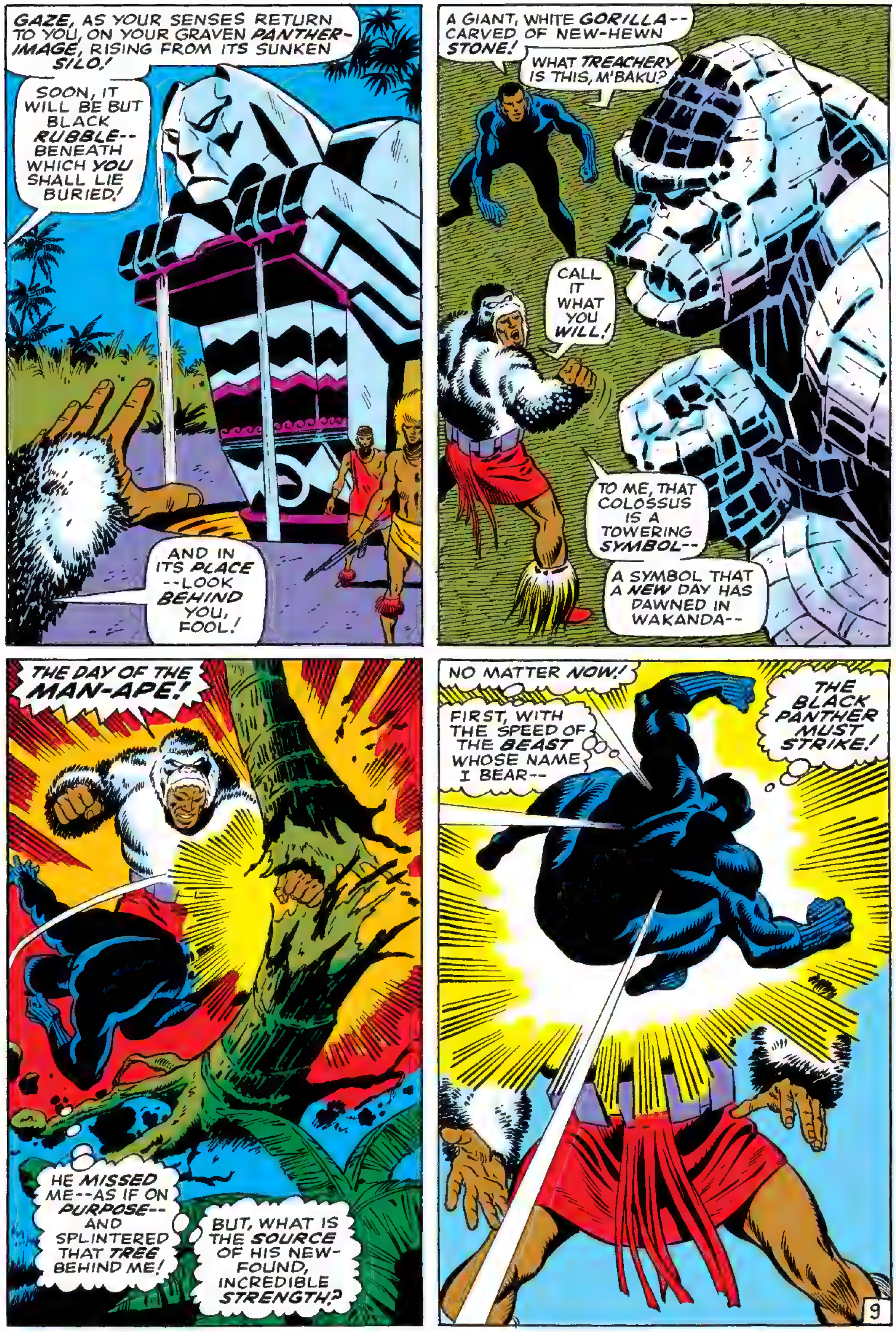
SHEESH! THIS IS WHAT T'CHALLA CALLS HOME SWEET HOME?
LOOKS LIKE A LEFT-OVER SET FROM BARBARELLA!
WHO'S HIS BUTLER-- BELA LUGOSI!?
WE'LL ASK HIM, ARCHER, WHEN HE EMERGES FROM HIS FLAGSHIP!
MEANWHILE, THINK ON HOW THIS LOOKS TO AN ANDROID--TO ONE WHO HAS NO MEMORIES OF HOME OR HEARTH....!
WAIT!
THAT OMINOUS HUMMING!
COMING FROM ABOVE-- ALMOST AS IF THIS WERE--
A TRAP!!
BUT--WE'RE THE GUESTS OF THE BLACK PANTHER!
WHO WOULD DARE--??
I HAVE A QUESTION FROM THE BALCONY, DOCTOR--
SLAM!
--AND HERE COMES THE DOWN-HOME TRUTH SQUAD NOW!
SHOCK THEM INTO SUBMISSION!
QUICKLY!!
NO WALL OF MERE PLEXI-GLASS CAN HOLD--THE VISION!
FOR, I CAN EITHER REDUCE MY MOLECULAR DENSITY --AND WALK THRU IT--
OR, AS NOW-- I CAN SMASH IT WITH A FIST AS HARD AS DIAMOND!
4

ONE OF THEM ESCAPES!
FIRE!
WE ARE FIRING, BUT-- LOOK!
YES, LOOK--AND, IF YOUR EYES ARE FAST ENOUGH--
YOU'LL SEE YOUR PUNY BULLETS SHATTER ON MY ANDROID FRAME!
NOW I'LL JOIN THE FRAY-- WITH MY EBONY BLADE!
BUT, NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE!
SHOTS-- OUTSIDE THE SHIP!
WHATEVER THEIR SOURCE-- WHATEVER THEIR CAUSE --THEY MUST CEASE!
WOULD SOME MAD FOOL UNDO THE WORK OF YEARS?
HALT!!
NO! IT CANNOT BE!
IT'S--PRINCE T'CHALLA!
THE BLACK PANTHER HAS RETURNED!
AND RETURNED ONLY, IT SEEMS, TO FIND HIS SUBJECTS BECOME ASSASSINS!
AND YET, T'CHALLA --IF THEY THOUGHT WE WERE INTRUDERS--!
NO MATTER!
W'KABI--SPEAK THE COMMAND I GAVE BEFORE I DEPARTED THIS LAND!
WE...WERE NEVER TO USE OUR WEAPONS AGAINST MEN...EXCEPT BY ROYAL ORDER!
BUT, MIGHTY CHIEFTAIN--
THAT ORDER HAS BEEN GIVEN!
...BY HIM WHO RULES FOR YOU--BY M'BAKU!
5

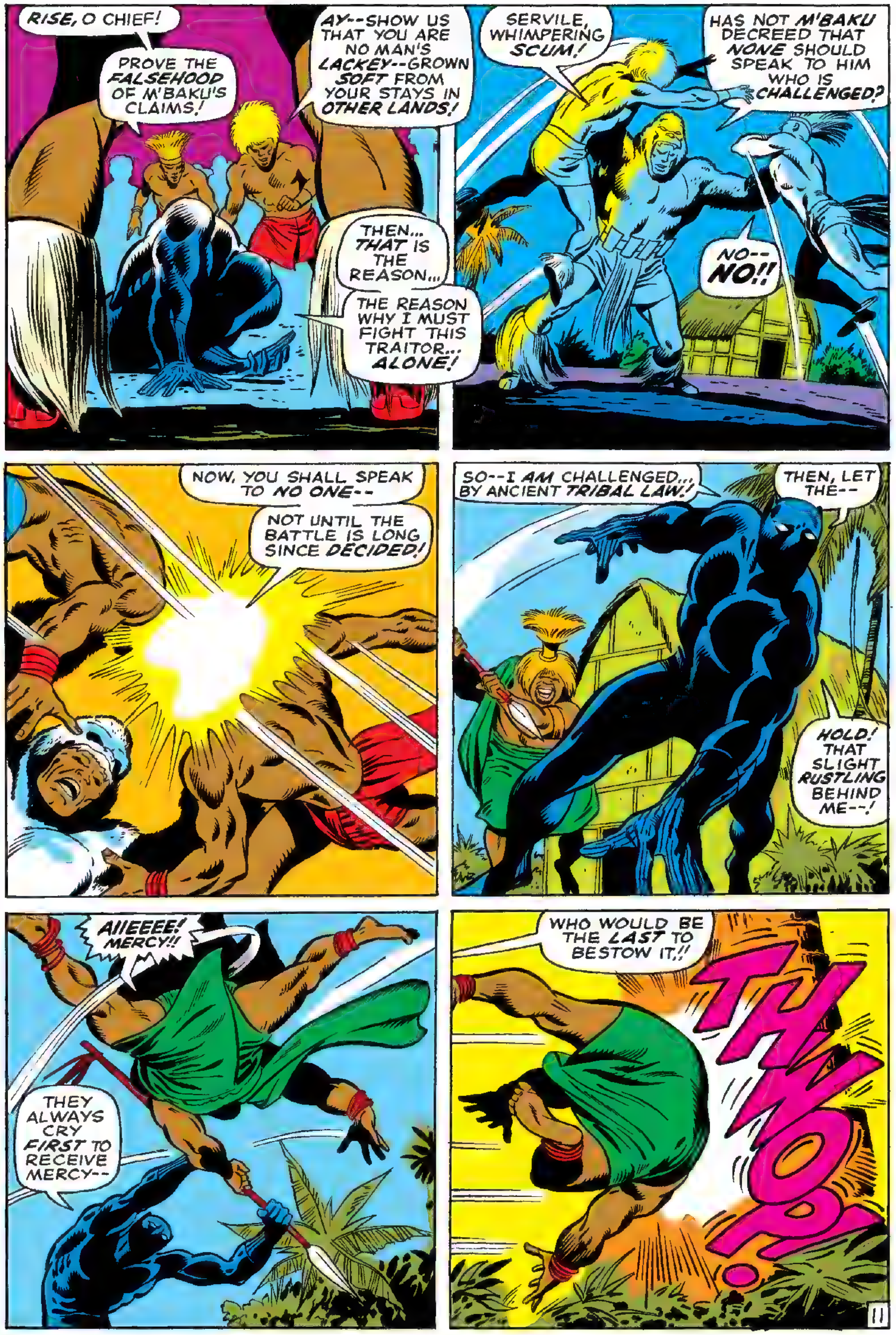

M'BAKU! I SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED!
GO--TELL YOUR LEADER THAT HIS OWN CHIEFTAIN HAS RETURNED!
SOON, HE SHALL ANSWER TO ME FOR THIS OUTRAGE!
I SHALL TELL HIM, GREAT T'CHALLA!
...AND, HE SHALL BE HERE WITHIN MINUTES, O M'BAKU!
IT IS GOOD!
LONG, WEARY MONTHS HAVE I PLAYED CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS, FOR FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE!
GLADLY SHALL I LAY DOWN THE STAFF OF SUPREMACY--
--AND BECOME ONCE MORE BUT FIRST AMONG THE WAKANDA WARRIORS!
N'GAMO...THE MOMENT WHEN WE STRIKE IS AT HAND!
MAKE THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS ...IN SULTRY STEALTH!
IT WILL BE DONE, O M'BAKU!
HE WHO IS BOUND TO A STAR DOES NOT WISH IT TO FALL!
YOU--LACKEY --WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
GIVE THE WORD TO PREPARE A MEAL FIT FOR A KING!
FOR, A KING HAS INDEED RETURNED TO HIS THRONE-- IF ONLY FOR A SINGLE NIGHT!
YES, O M'BAKU...!
6.


I HAVE LONG AWAITED THIS HALCYON HOMECOMING, MIGHTY CHIEFTAIN!
THOUGH YOURS IS THE SACRED PANTHER POWER--THOUGH NONE IN THE JUNGLE HAS EVER MATCHED YOUR PROWESS--
STILL, ONLY ONE MAY SIT THE THRONE OF WAKANDA!
AND, THAT ONE MUST EVER BE... M'BAKU!
YET, EVEN A VILLAIN MAY SMILE... AND SMILE...
WELCOME, ONCE AND EVER CHIEFTAIN, TO YOUR HOMELAND!
A THOUSAND PARDONS FOR THE GUN-CRAZED FOOLS WHO MISCONSTRUED MY COMMANDS!
COMMANDS WHICH WE MUST DISCUSS, OLD FRIEND!
AFTER THE BLACK KNIGHT AND MY FELLOW AVENGERS ARE SEEN TO!
OF COURSE, O T'CHALLA!
THIS IS INDEED A DAY FOR FEASTING!
...SO YOU SEE, MY ORDERS WERE NOT ILL-CONSIDERED!
REPORTS HAVE COME TO ME THAT YOUR OLD ENEMY, KLAW, IS AFOOT ONCE MORE!
A SIMPLE CALL TO ME WOULD HAVE DISPELLED SUCH RUMORS, M'BAKU!
KLAW LANGUISHES IN PRISON... WHERE HE HAS EVER BELONGED!
STILL, PERHAPS YOUR MOTIVES WERE BETTER THAN YOUR JUDGMENT!
I SHALL WITHHOLD MY VERDICT...!
SO THIS IS T'CHALLA'S KINGDOM--
--WHICH HE LEFT TO SERVE THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY!
THIS IS ONE MEAL I COULD REALLY ENJOY...
IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE NATASHA IS!*
*WOULD HE? NOT IF HE PORED OVER CAPTAIN MARVEL #12! --STAN.
7

MY HEART WAXES GLAD THAT YOU HAVE NOT MISUNDERSTOOD MY INTENT, GOOD T'CHALLA!
THUS, LET M'BAKU PROPOSE A TOAST!
A TOAST TO THE BLACK PANTHER-- AND TO HIS HONORED GUESTS!
I'LL DRINK YOUR TOAST, M'BAKU!
BUT, MY DECISION IS ONLY POST-PONED...!
HOWEVER, AS EVEN THE ANDROID VISION SIPS FROM THE PROFFERED CUPS...
THE WINE... DRUGGED! WHAT--??
CAN'T... STAY AWAKE...!
YOU-- M'BAKU!
THIS WAS... YOUR TRAITOROUS DEED...
YOOURS...!
HAH! THE DRUG HAS TAKEN EFFECT!
N'GAMO... MAKE READY NOW THE FINAL PHASE!
YES, MY CHIEF!
WITH INFINITE RELISH!
...AWAKEN, DOOMED ONE!
LOOK ON THE SNARLING VISION OF DOOM!!
VOICES... SPINNING IN MY TORTURED BRAIN!
AND... FACES... BESTIAL, GROTESQUE, MOCKING...!
M'BAKU!
WEARING THE FORBIDDEN GUISE OF THE WHITE GORILLA--
--IN OUR LEGENDS, THE MOST SAVAGE... MOST MERCILESS OF BEASTS!
IT WAS YOU WHO FORBADE SUCH REGALIA, PANTHER--
NOT M'BAKU!
NOT HE WHO IS CALLED ...THE MAN-APE!
8


GAZE, AS YOUR SENSES RETURN TO YOU, ON YOUR GRAVEN PANTHER-IMAGE, RISING FROM ITS SUNKEN SILO!
SOON, IT WILL BE BUT BLACK RUBBLE-- BENEATH WHICH YOU SHALL LIE BURIED!
AND IN ITS PLACE --LOOK BEHIND YOU, FOOL!
A GIANT, WHITE GORILLA-- CARVED OF NEW-HEWN STONE!
WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS, M'BAKU?
CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL!
TO ME, THAT COLOSSUS IS A TOWERING SYMBOL--
A SYMBOL THAT A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED IN WAKANDA--
THE DAY OF THE MAN-APE!
HE MISSED ME--AS IF ON PURPOSE-- AND SPLINTERED THAT TREE BEHIND ME!
BUT, WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF HIS NEW-FOUND, INCREDIBLE STRENGTH?
NO MATTER NOW!
FIRST, WITH THE SPEED OF THE BEAST WHOSE NAME I BEAR--
THE BLACK PANTHER MUST STRIKE!
9

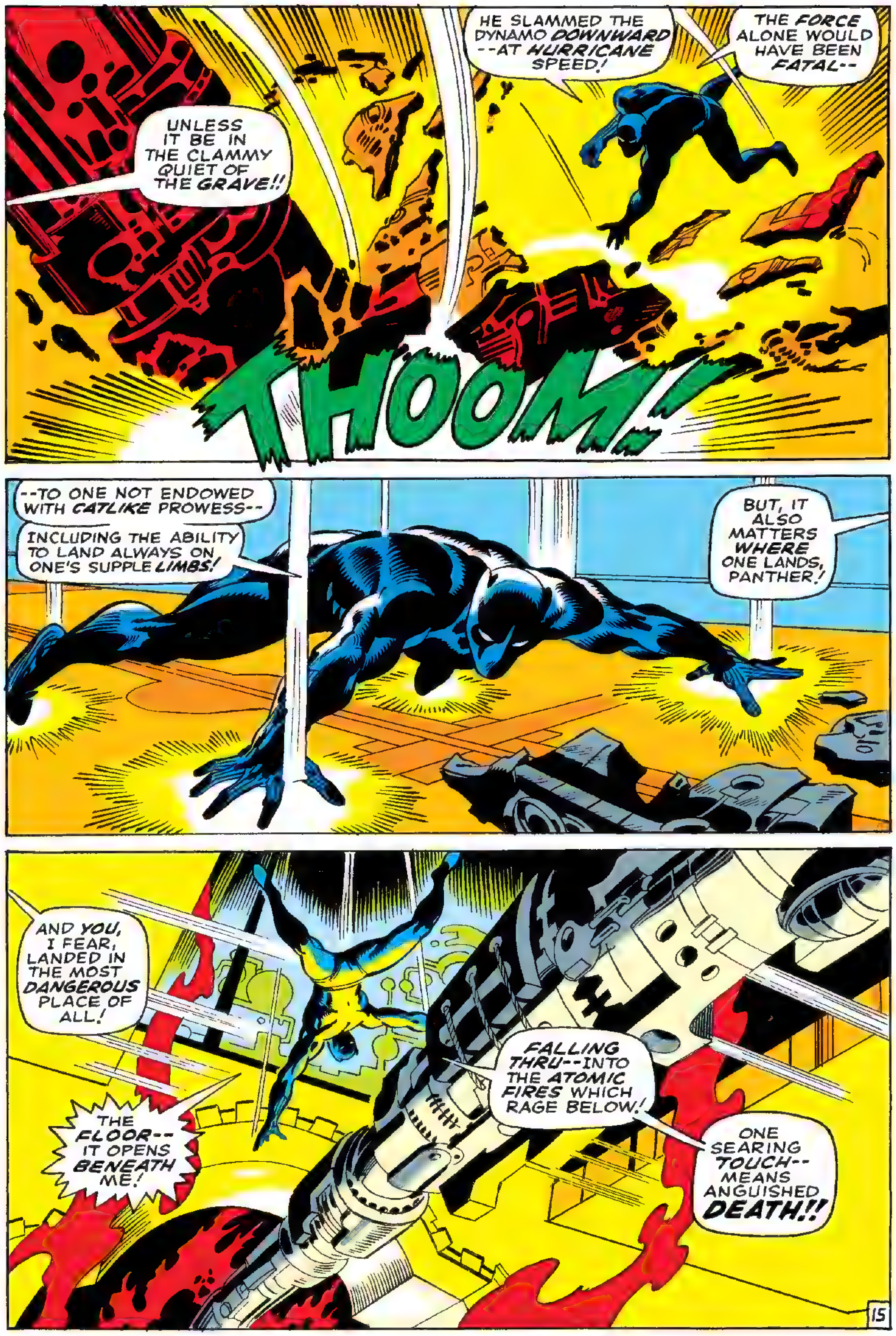
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS??
HE TOOK THE FULL BRUNT OF THE BLOW--!
I SHALL TAKE FAR MORE THAN THAT, FOOL--
I SHALL ALSO TAKE --YOUR LIFE!
HE TOYS WITH ME-- AS IF UNWILLING THAT I SHOULD DIE QUICKLY!
BUT, WHY DO MY OWN PEOPLE NOT RISE AGAINST HIM?
WHY DO THEY KNEEL BENEATH HIS TYRANT FOOT--FORGETTING THEIR PROUD HERITAGE?
HOW CAN THE BLACK PANTHER FIGHT ON, IF HIS TRIBES-MEN NO LONGER VALUE THEIR FREEDOM?
FREEDOM?
YOU DARE TO SPEAK OF FREEDOM?
YOU, WHO HAVE SOLD YOURSELF TO OUR WHITE-SKINNED ENEMIES?
AAARRRHH!
10


RISE, O CHIEF!
PROVE THE FALSEHOOD OF M'BAKU'S CLAIMS!
AY--SHOW US THAT YOU ARE NO MAN'S LACKEY--GROWN SOFT FROM YOUR STAYS IN OTHER LANDS!
THEN... THAT IS THE REASON...
THE REASON WHY I MUST FIGHT THIS TRAITOR... ALONE!
SERVILE, WHIMPERING SCUM!
HAS NOT M'BAKU DECREED THAT NONE SHOULD SPEAK TO HIM WHO IS CHALLENGED?
NO--NO!!
NOW, YOU SHALL SPEAK TO NO ONE--
NOT UNTIL THE BATTLE IS LONG SINCE DECIDED!
SO--I AM CHALLENGED... BY ANCIENT TRIBAL LAW!
THEN, LET THE--
HOLD! THAT SLIGHT RUSTLING BEHIND ME--!
AIIEEEE! MERCY!!
THEY ALWAYS CRY FIRST TO RECEIVE MERCY--
WHO WOULD BE THE LAST TO BESTOW IT!!
THWOP!
11

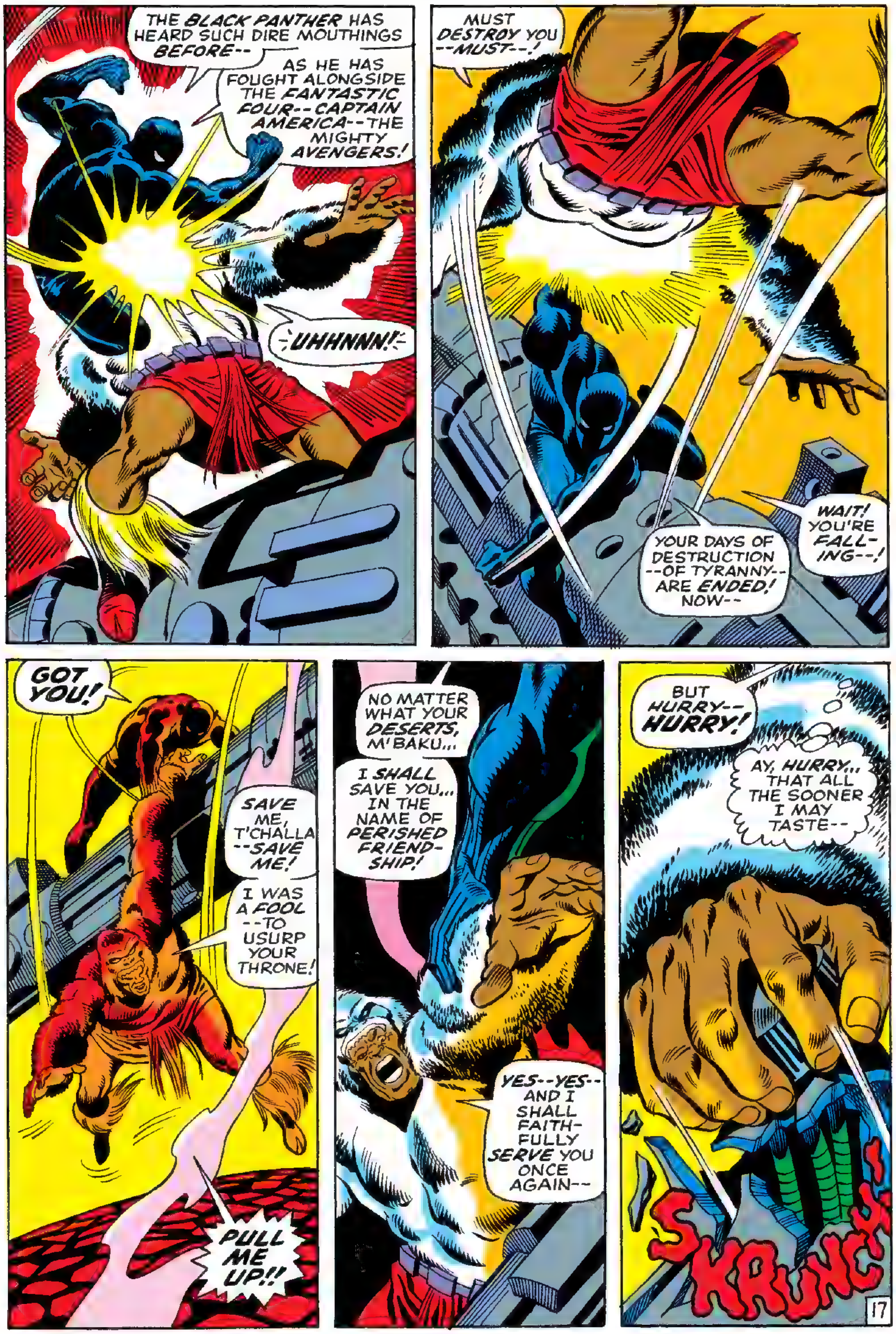
SUCH GOLDEN WORDS MAY SERVE YOU WELL IN THE OUTER WORLD, PUNY ONE!
BUT, IN THE JUNGLE, THEY ONLY WASTE PRECIOUS MOMENTS--
DURING WHICH I CAN TURN THIS UPROOTED TREE--INTO A DEADLY MISSILE!
AND SO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN--BUT FOR MY PANTHER SPEED!
BUT, I CANNOT PROVE MY CAUSE BY MERE FLIGHT!
MUST GAIN TIME TO THINK --TO PLOT A STRATEGY!
THERE-- IN THE DARKENED CONTROL CENTER OF MY MAN-MADE JUNGLE!
STOP, M'BAKU!
THINK OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO YOUR FELLOW TRIBES-MEN--TO YOURSELF!
WOULD YOU WIPE OUT ALL PROGRESS --TURN THE WAKANDAS BACK DOWN THE ROAD TO SAVAGERY?
AY, PANTHER--
FOR, ONLY IN A PRIMITIVE WORLD IS POWER ITS OWN REWARD!
IT IS USELESS TO TRADE WORDS WITH THAT HUMAN BEHEMOTH!
BUT, AT LEAST I HAVE LED HIM AWAY FROM THE CAPTIVE AVENGERS, AND--
WAIT!
IT IS BEYOND BELIEF! HE SMASHED DOWN THE DOOR WITH ONE BLOW!
YOU MIGHT AS WELL TAKE REFUGE IN A HUT OF STRAW, JACKAL--
--AS HOPE THAT MERE METAL COULD SHIELD YOU FROM M'BAKU!
12

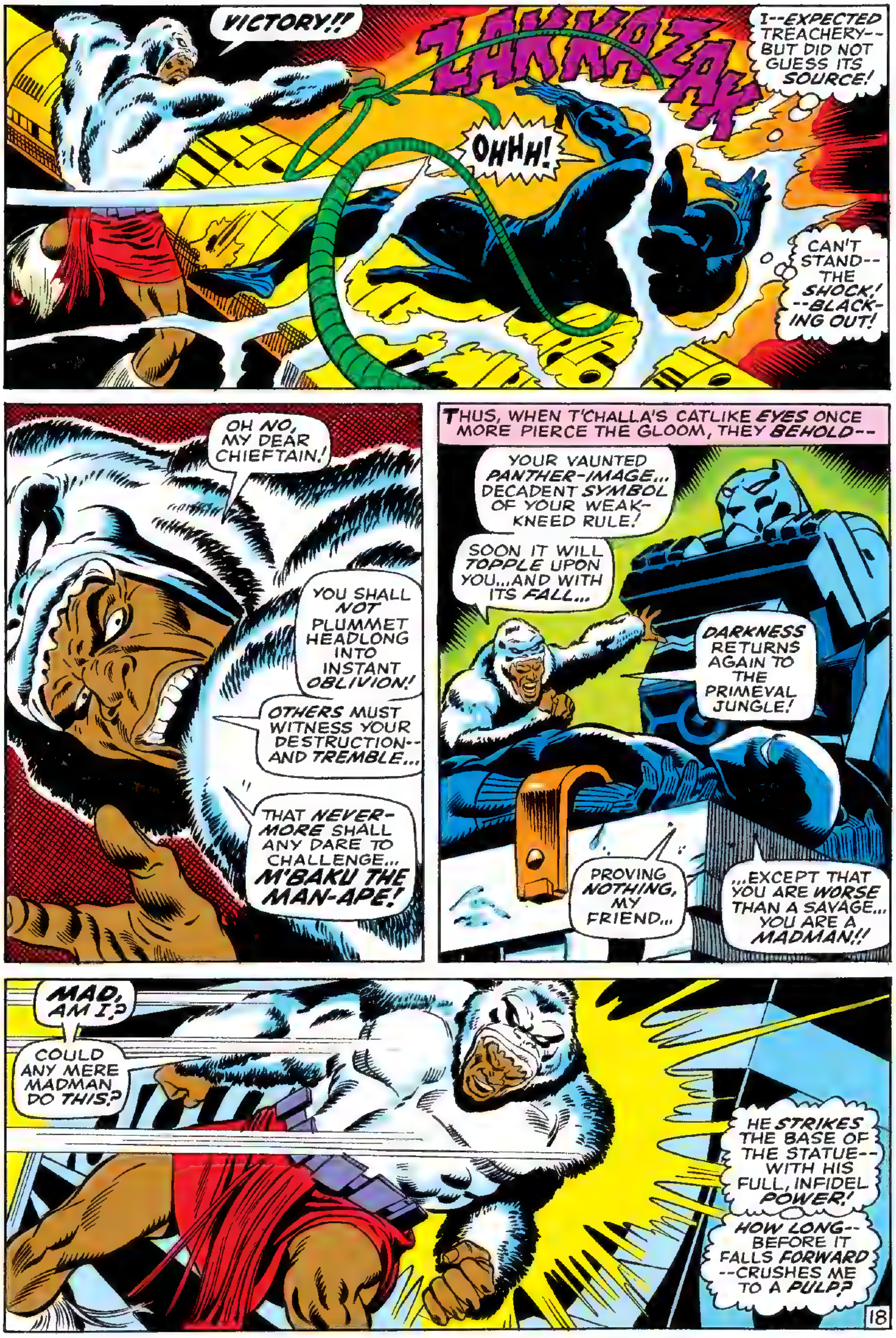
YOUR DEFEAT WAS SCRAWLED IN THE WIND, FOOL!
IF MERE HERBS GAVE YOU THE SKILLS OF THE STALKING PANTHER...
HOW MUCH GREATER IS MY BRUTE STRENGTH-- STRENGTH OBTAINED FROM THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE FABLED WHITE GORILLA!!
STEP INTO THE LIGHT-- AND END THIS FARCE!
THUS SHALL IT END, TRAITOR--
WITH YOUR TOTAL DEFEAT-- AND DISGRACE!
AARRGHHH!
HE SPRAWLS STILL AS DEATH ITSELF!
COULD ONE STEALTHY BLOW--STRUCK IN DARKNESS--HAVE DOWNED HIM?
IT WOULD SEEM NOT, AND YET--
HERE HE LIES --SILENT, UNMOVING--
VICTORY, IT WOULD SEEM, IS MINE!
BUT THERE IS NO JOY IN THE FALL OF HIM I ONCE TRUSTED--
--HIM I ONCE CALLED... FRIEND!
13

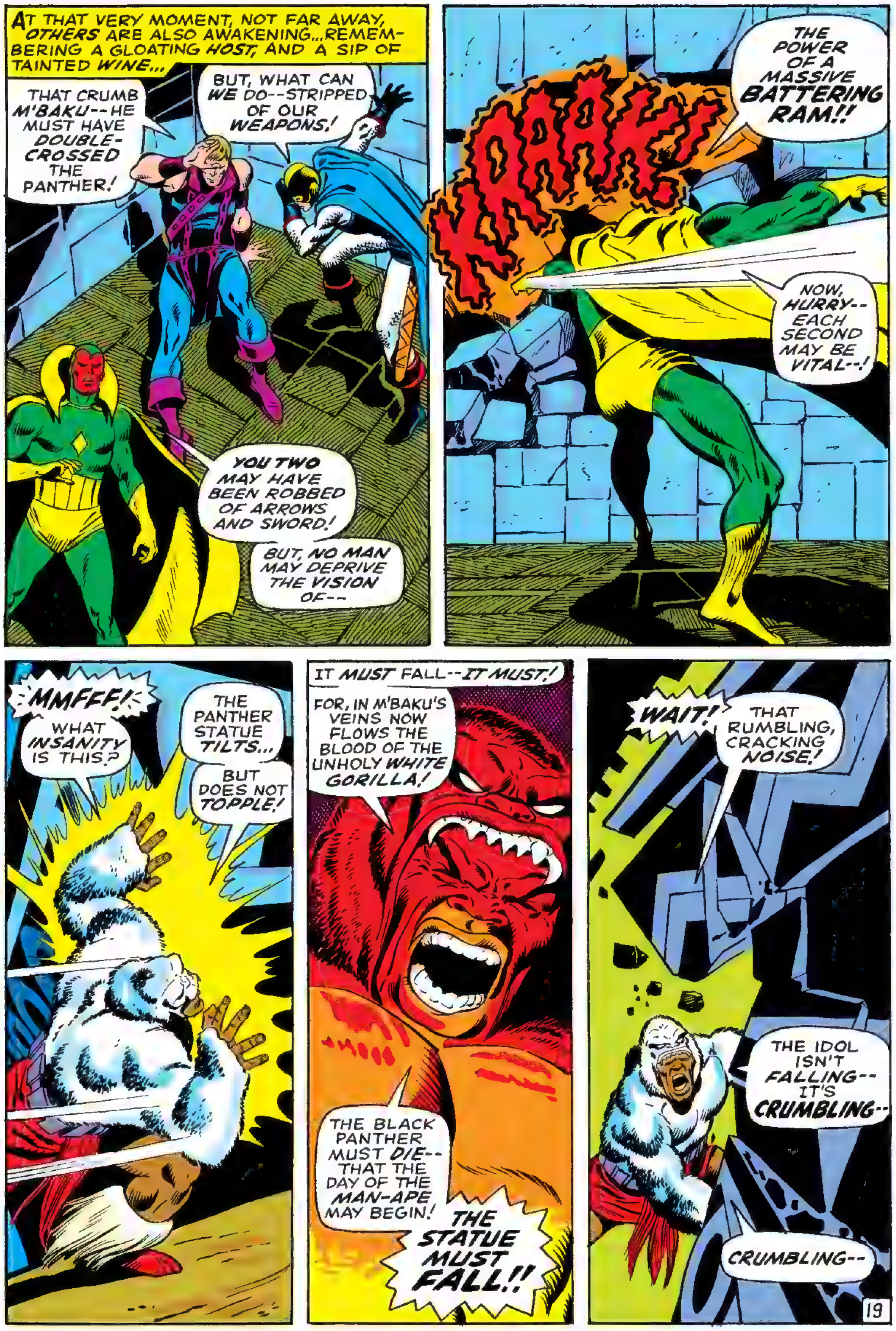
BUT, THERE SHALL BE A TIME LATER FOR TEARS OF REMORSE!
FOR NOW, I MUST FREE THE AVENGERS --THEN...
HOLD! THAT NOISE--!
--IS THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN DOOM, FOOL-- CLATTERING DOWN BEFORE YOU!
AN IRON WALL--
IMPRISONING ME WITHIN THIS ROOM!
M'BAKU PLANNED IT THUS!
THEN WHY--
--DID I FEIGN DEFEAT?
I COULD NOT RISK YOUR ESCAPING --INTO THE JUNGLE BLACKNESS!
HE TURNED ON THE LIGHTS!
MY POWER IS HALVED, WITHOUT THE DARKNESS IN WHICH I THRIVE!
EVEN HERE--ON A PRECARIOUS PERCH HIGH ABOVE THE FLOOR--
I KNOW NO MOMENT OF RESPITE!
NOR SHALL YOU EVER AGAIN FEEL THE BALM OF REST--
RRIPP
14


HE SLAMMED THE DYNAMO DOWNWARD --AT HURRICANE SPEED!
THE FORCE ALONE WOULD HAVE BEEN FATAL--
UNLESS IT BE IN THE CLAMMY QUIET OF THE GRAVE!!
THOOM!
--TO ONE NOT ENDOWED WITH CATLIKE PROWESS--
INCLUDING THE ABILITY TO LAND ALWAYS ON ONE'S SUPPLE LIMBS!
BUT, IT ALSO MATTERS WHERE ONE LANDS, PANTHER!
AND YOU, I FEAR, LANDED IN THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE OF ALL!
THE FLOOR-- IT OPENS BENEATH ME!
FALLING THRU--INTO THE ATOMIC FIRES WHICH RAGE BELOW!
ONE SEARING TOUCH-- MEANS ANGUISHED DEATH!!
15

BROKE MY FALL--MERE INCHES FROM A FIERY END!
YET, EVEN ONE INCH IS FAR ENOUGH--
--IF IT LEAVES THE BLACK PANTHER ALIVE TO FIGHT--TO ENDURE--TO CONQUER!
BUT, WHICH WAY LIES THE PATH TO SAFETY?
AHEAD ROARS THE ATOMIC FURNACE--MOLTEN, SEETHING!
WHILE, BEHIND ME--
--WAITS DOOM!!
M'BAKU!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WOULD NEVER TRUST THE NUCLEAR FLAMES TO DO YOUR HANDI-WORK!
IT PLEASES ME THAT YOU WERE SPARED THAT FORM OF DEATH, HAPLESS ONE--
--THAT I MYSELF MIGHT--
YEEOWWWR!
YOU NEED NOT FINISH YOUR SNARLING THREATS, MAN-APE...
16

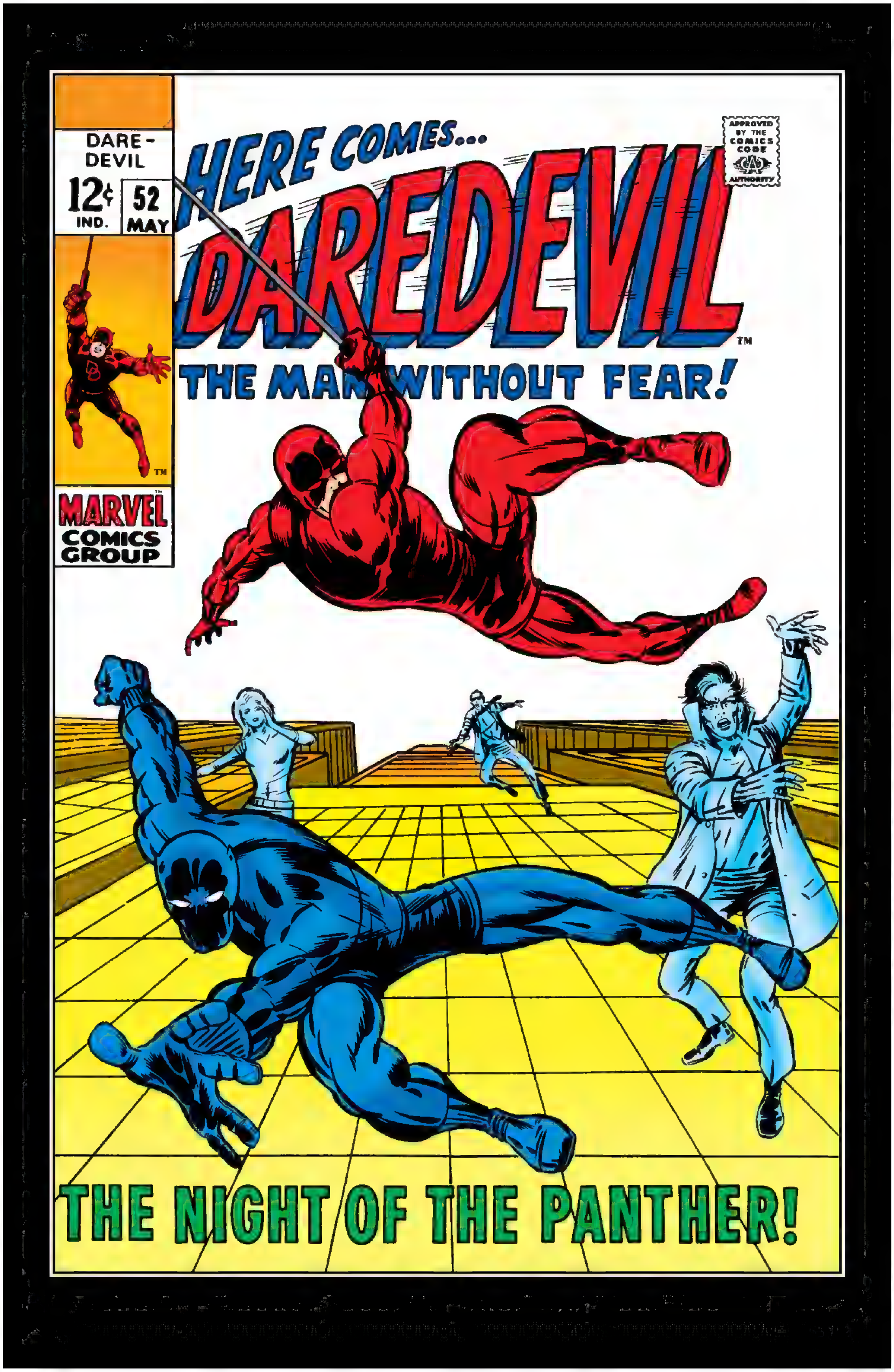

THE BLACK PANTHER HAS HEARD SUCH DIRE MOUTHINGS BEFORE--
AS HE HAS FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- CAPTAIN AMERICA--THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
-UHHNNN!-
MUST DESTROY YOU --MUST--!
YOUR DAYS OF DESTRUCTION --OF TYRANNY-- ARE ENDED! NOW--
WAIT! YOU'RE FALL-ING--!
GOT YOU!
SAVE ME, T'CHALLA --SAVE ME!
I WAS A FOOL --TO USURP YOUR THRONE!
PULL ME UP!!
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR DESERTS, M'BAKU...
I SHALL SAVE YOU... IN THE NAME OF PERISHED FRIEND-SHIP!
YES--YES-- AND I SHALL FAITH-FULLY SERVE YOU ONCE AGAIN--
BUT HURRY-- HURRY!
AY, HURRY... THAT ALL THE SOONER I MAY TASTE--
SKRUNCH!
17


VICTORY!!
ZAKKAZAK
I--EXPECTED TREACHERY--BUT DID NOT GUESS ITS SOURCE!
OHHH!
CAN'T STAND--THE SHOCK!--BLACK-ING OUT!
OH NO, MY DEAR CHIEFTAIN!
YOU SHALL NOT PLUMMET HEADLONG INTO INSTANT OBLIVION!
OTHERS MUST WITNESS YOUR DESTRUCTION--AND TREMBLE...
THAT NEVER-MORE SHALL ANY DARE TO CHALLENGE... M'BAKU THE MAN-APE!
THUS, WHEN T'CHALLA'S CATLIKE EYES ONCE MORE PIERCE THE GLOOM, THEY BEHOLD--
YOUR VAUNTED PANTHER-IMAGE... DECADENT SYMBOL OF YOUR WEAK-KNEED RULE!
SOON IT WILL TOPPLE UPON YOU...AND WITH ITS FALL...
DARKNESS RETURNS AGAIN TO THE PRIMEVAL JUNGLE!
PROVING NOTHING, MY FRIEND...
...EXCEPT THAT YOU ARE WORSE THAN A SAVAGE... YOU ARE A MADMAN!!
MAD, AM I?
COULD ANY MERE MADMAN DO THIS?
HE STRIKES THE BASE OF THE STATUE--WITH HIS FULL, INFIDEL POWER!
HOW LONG--BEFORE IT FALLS FORWARD--CRUSHES ME TO A PULP?
18

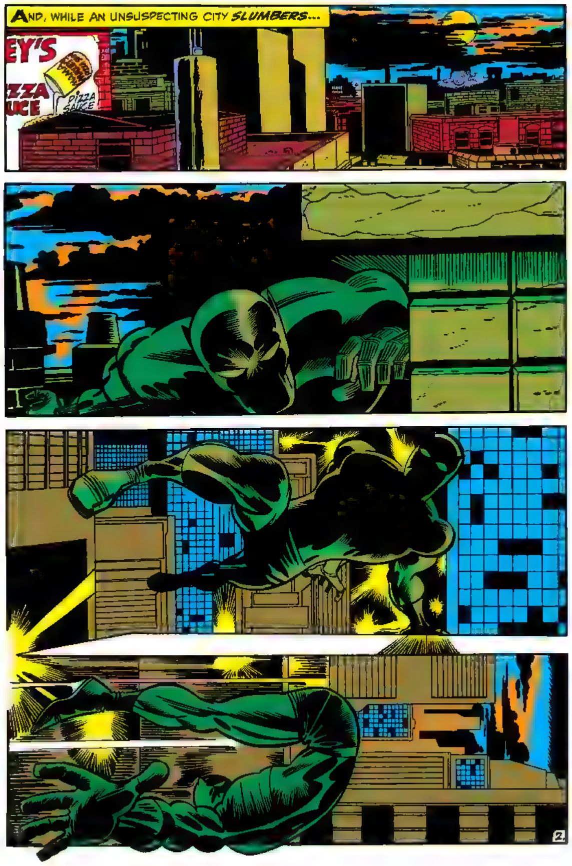


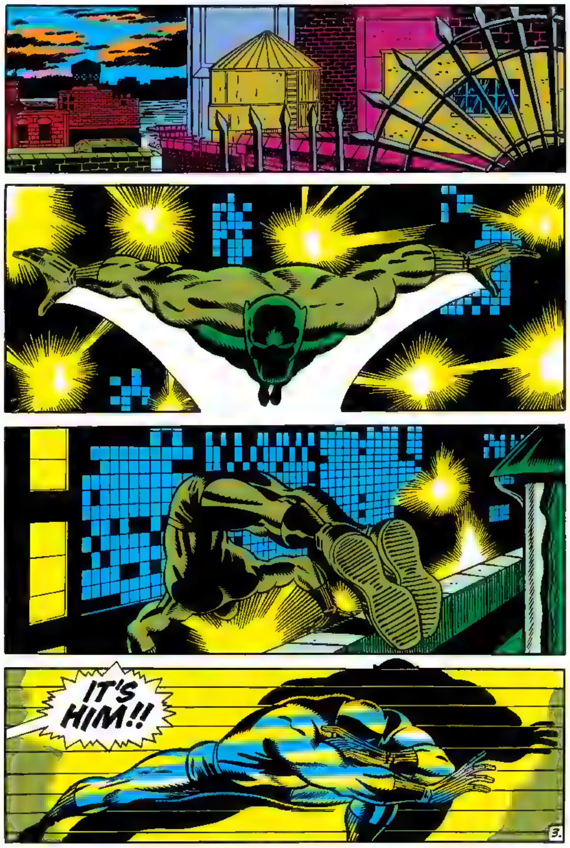
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, NOT FAR AWAY, OTHERS ARE ALSO AWAKENING... REMEMBERING A GLOATING HOST, AND A SIP OF TAINTED WINE...
THAT CRUMB M'BAKU--HE MUST HAVE DOUBLE-CROSSED THE PANTHER!
BUT, WHAT CAN WE DO--STRIPPED OF OUR WEAPONS!
YOU TWO MAY HAVE BEEN ROBBED OF ARROWS AND SWORD!
BUT, NO MAN MAY DEPRIVE THE VISION OF--
THE POWER OF A MASSIVE BATTERING RAM!!
KRAAK!
NOW, HURRY--EACH SECOND MAY BE VITAL--!
MMFFF!
WHAT INSANITY IS THIS?
THE PANTHER STATUE TILTS...
BUT DOES NOT TOPPLE!
IT MUST FALL--IT MUST!
FOR, IN M'BAKU'S VEINS NOW FLOWS THE BLOOD OF THE UNHOLY WHITE GORILLA!
THE BLACK PANTHER MUST DIE--THAT THE DAY OF THE MAN-APE MAY BEGIN!
THE STATUE MUST FALL!!
WAIT!
THAT RUMBLING, CRACKING NOISE!
THE IDOL ISN'T FALLING--IT'S CRUMBLING--
CRUMBLING--

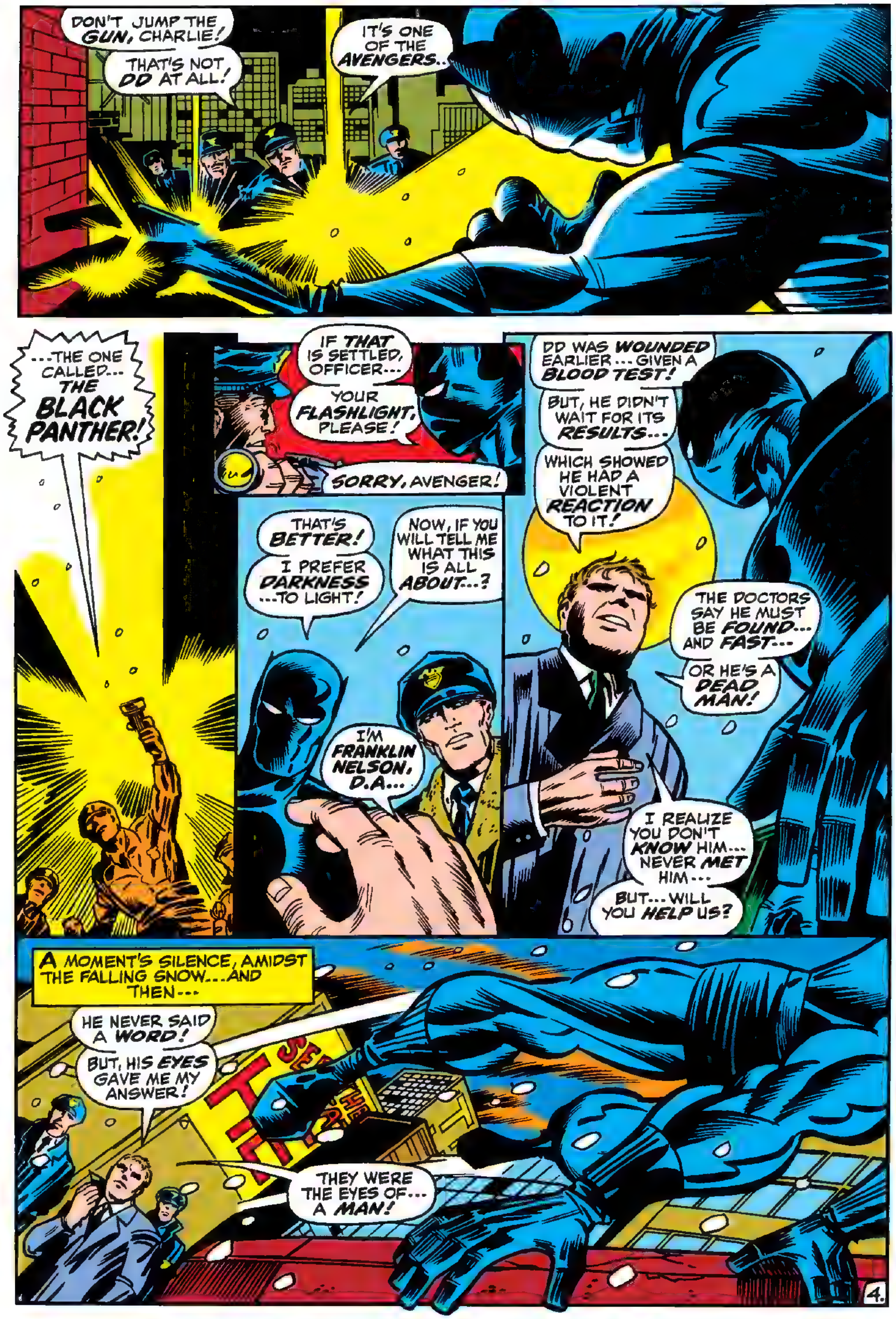
After the battle with M'Baku, T'Challa returns to New York with the Avengers where he teams up with another hero…


DARE-DEVIL
12¢ IND.
52 MAY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HERE COMES...
DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
THE NIGHT OF THE PANTHER!

THE NIGHT OF THE PANTHER!
NOW PLAYING! STAN LEE EDITOR ROY THOMAS WRITER BARRY SMITH ARTIST
JOHNNY CRAIG INKER SAM ROSEN LETTERER
—HELD OVER—
52nd SMASH ISSUE
SIRENS WAILING--- BUBBLE-GUM MACHINE FLASHING...THE WHOLE MEGILLA!
MUST BE MORE THAN A LITTERBUG ON THE LOOSE, HUH?
WE'RE TEARING THIS TOWN APART, YOUNG LADY...LOOKING FOR DAREDEVIL!
BY JOHN PEEL
WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM...IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!
HIS DEATH!
POLICE

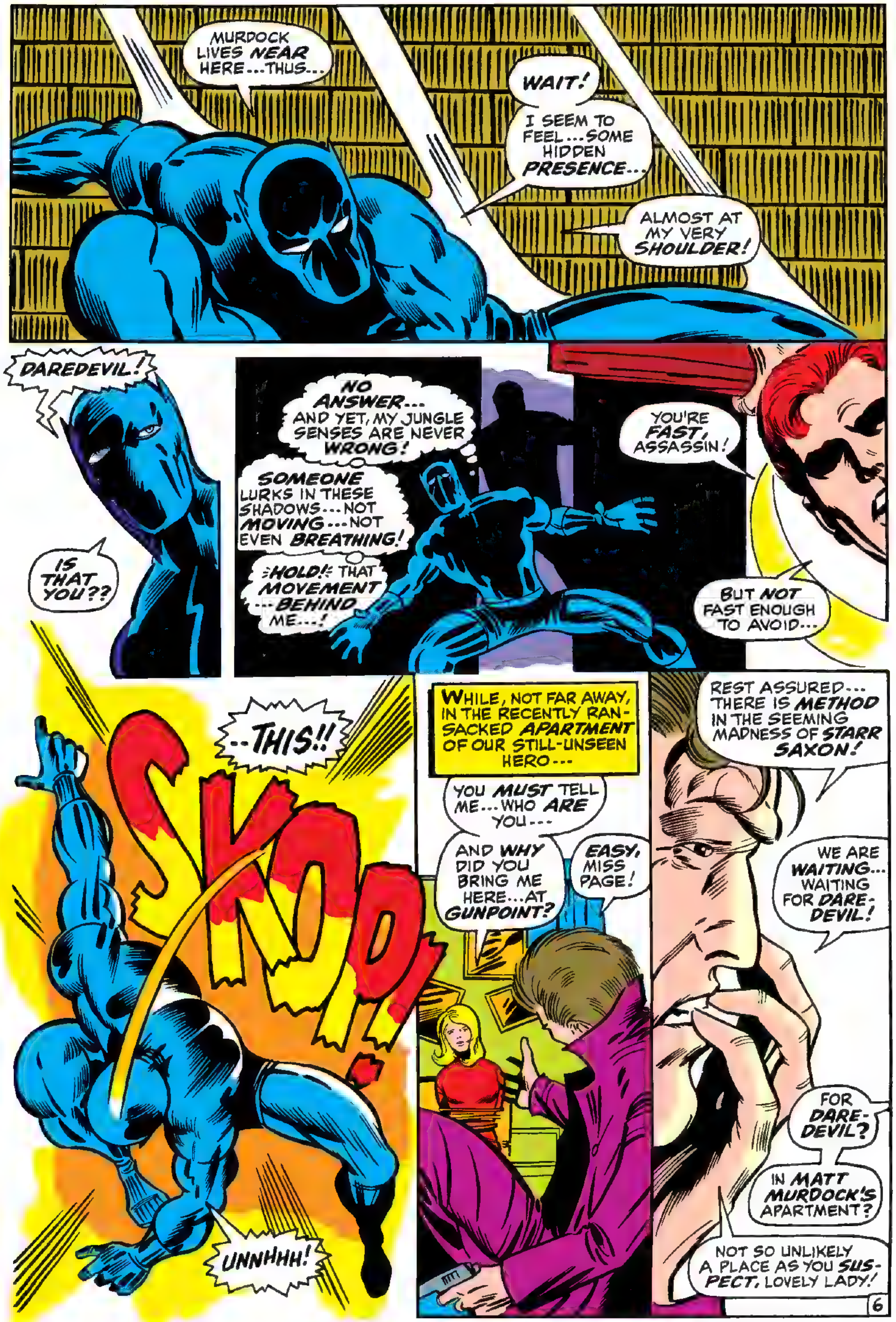

AND, WHILE AN UNSUSPECTING CITY SLUMBERS...
2.


IT'S HIM!!
3.

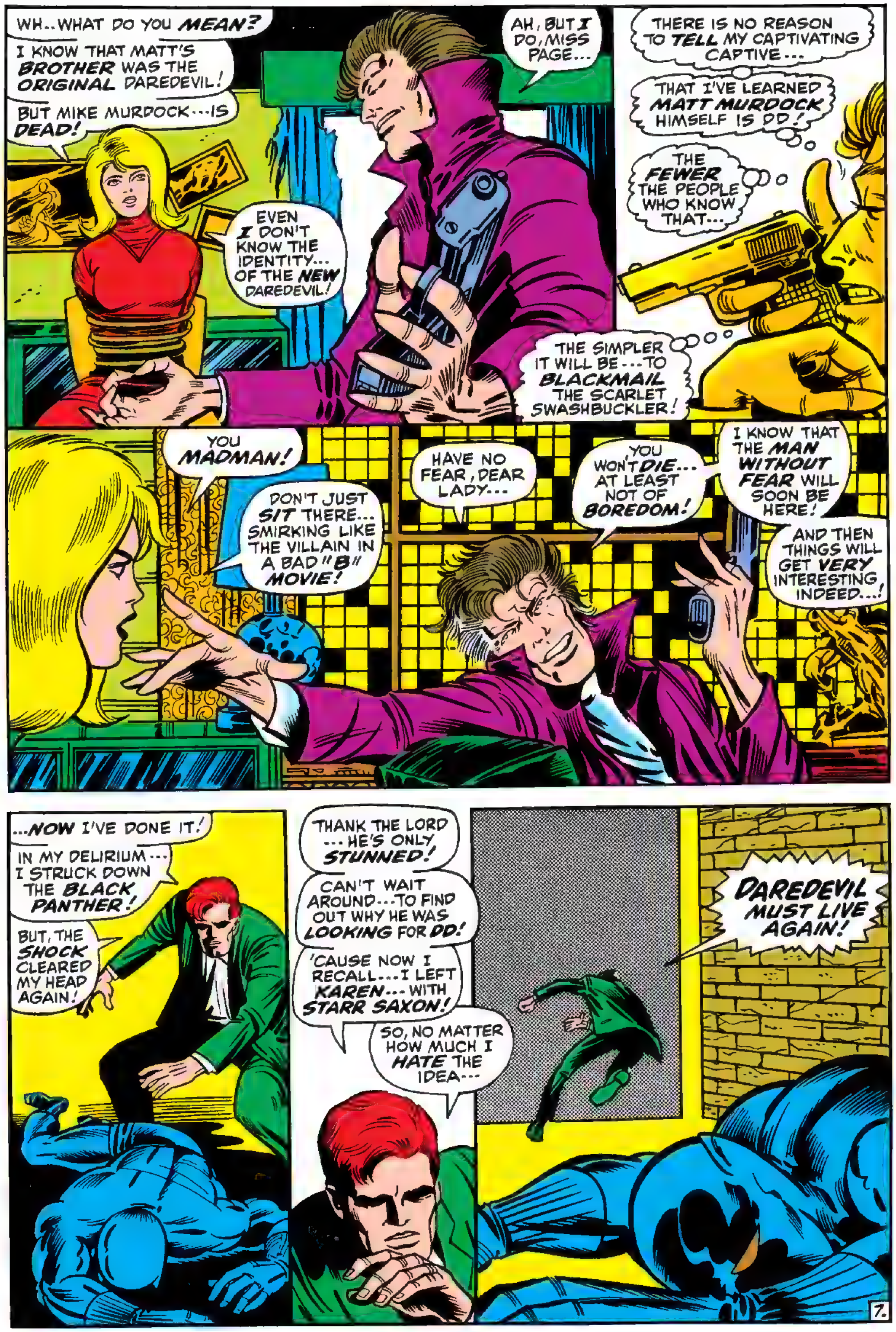


DON'T JUMP THE GUN, CHARLIE!
THAT'S NOT DD AT ALL!
IT'S ONE OF THE AVENGERS..
...THE ONE CALLED... THE BLACK PANTHER!
IF THAT IS SETTLED, OFFICER...
YOUR FLASHLIGHT, PLEASE!
SORRY, AVENGER!
THAT'S BETTER!
I PREFER DARKNESS ...TO LIGHT!
NOW, IF YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT...?
I'M FRANKLIN NELSON, D.A....
DD WAS WOUNDED EARLIER... GIVEN A BLOOD TEST!
BUT, HE DIDN'T WAIT FOR ITS RESULTS...
WHICH SHOWED HE HAD A VIOLENT REACTION TO IT!
THE DOCTORS SAY HE MUST BE FOUND... AND FAST...
OR HE'S A DEAD MAN!
I REALIZE YOU DON'T KNOW HIM... NEVER MET HIM...
BUT... WILL YOU HELP US?
A MOMENT'S SILENCE, AMIDST THE FALLING SNOW... AND THEN...
HE NEVER SAID A WORD!
BUT, HIS EYES GAVE ME MY ANSWER!
THEY WERE THE EYES OF... A MAN!
4.

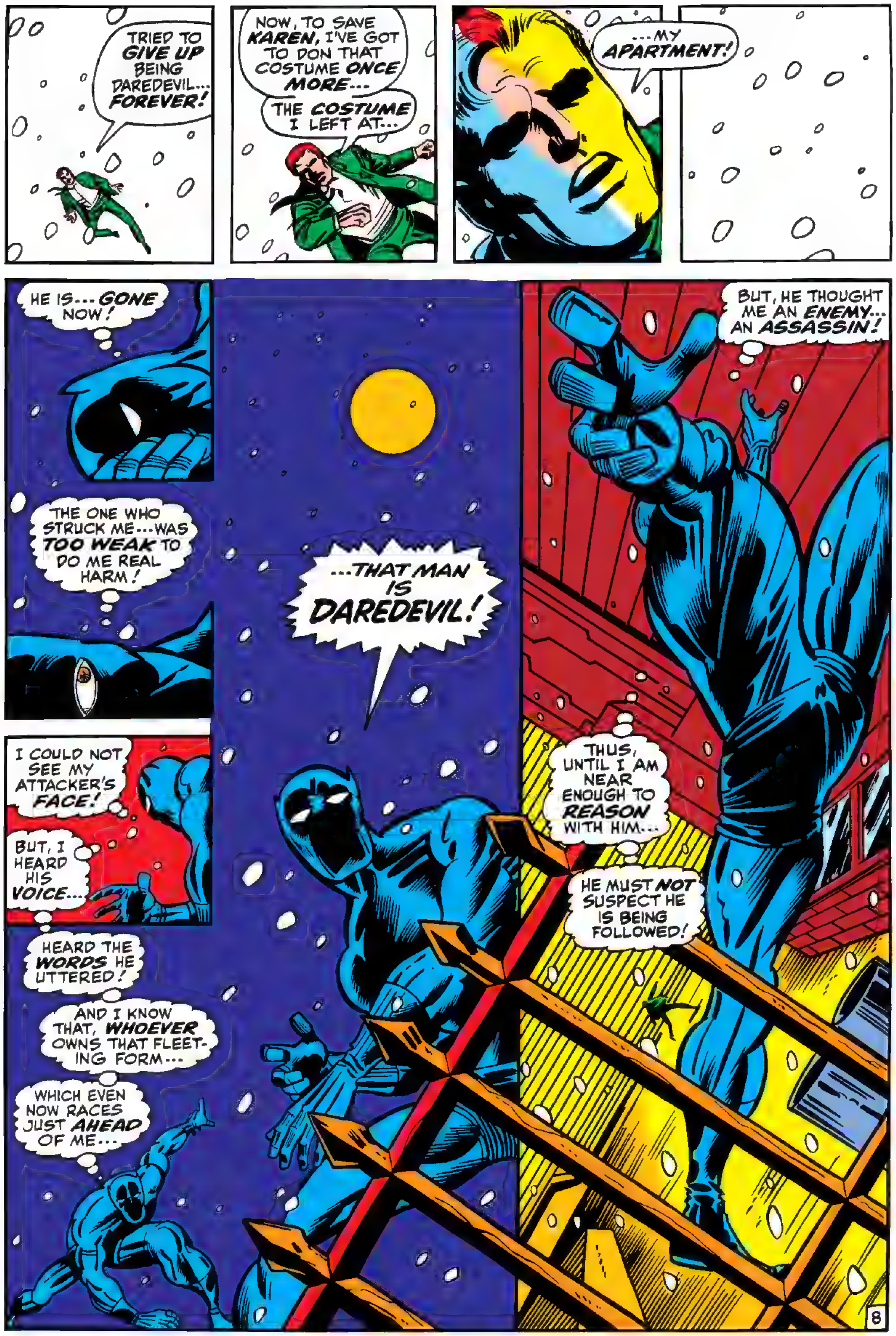
I'M AWARE OF HOW SIMILAR IS MY SILHOUETTE TO DAREDEVIL'S!
I WONDER... ARE THERE ANY OTHER SIMILARITIES?
CAN HE PERHAPS SEE IN THE DARK, AS I CAN?
OR HAS HE NO SUPER-POWERS AT ALL?
BUT, PERHAPS I SHALL LEARN THAT... IF AND WHEN I FIND HIM!
THIS IS THE PANTHER ...CALLING AVENGERS HQ...!
YELLOW-JACKET HERE, T'CHALLA!
ANY LUCK YET, LOCATING OUR BOY HAWKEYE?
IT ISN'T LIKE HIM TO WALK OFF MONITOR DUTY!
NEGATIVE, HANK!
MEANWHILE, I HAVE ANOTHER TASK!
THE HERO CALLED DAREDEVIL IS ALSO AMONG THE MISSING... AND IN MORTAL DANGER!
I HAVE AGREED TO JOIN THE SEARCH FOR HIM!
OVER AND OUT!
WHEW! OUR AFRICAN AVENGER DOESN'T WASTE WORDS!
AN ALL TOO HUMAN FAILING...
AS FAR AS THE VISION IS CONCERNED!
BESIDES TRACKING DOWN OUR WANDERING ARCHER?*
...I REMEMBER READING OF DAREDEVIL'S FRIENDSHIP WITH DISTRICT ATTORNEY NELSON...
AND WITH HIS BLIND FORMER LAW-PARTNER... MATTHEW MURDOCK!
DOUBTLESS THE POLICE HAVE ALREADY VISITED MURDOCK...
BUT THEY HAVE NOT THE RESOURCES OF... THE PANTHER!
*OBVIOUSLY, THE ABOVE SEQUENCE OCCURS BETWEEN AVENGERS #63 AND 64!... STAN.
5

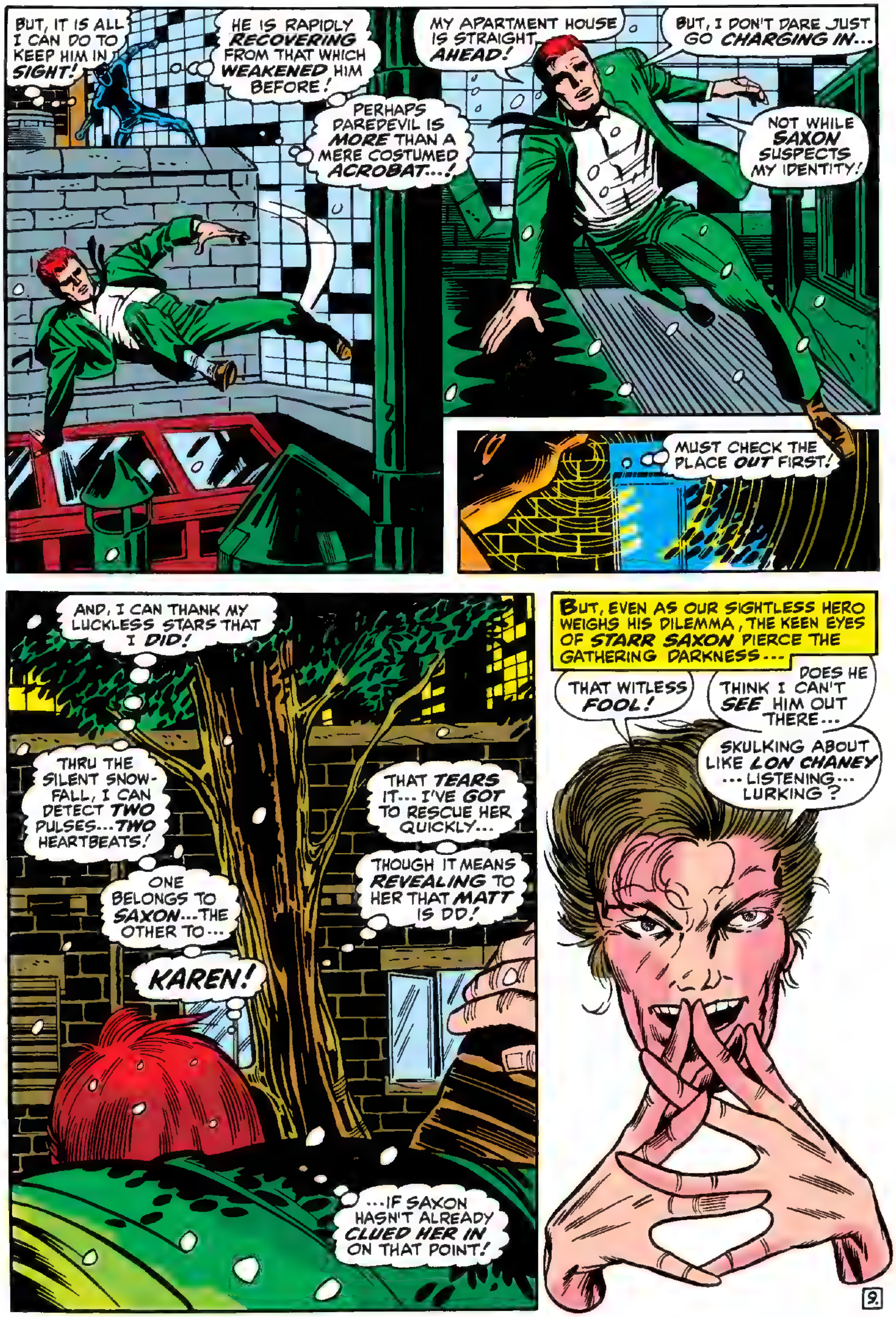


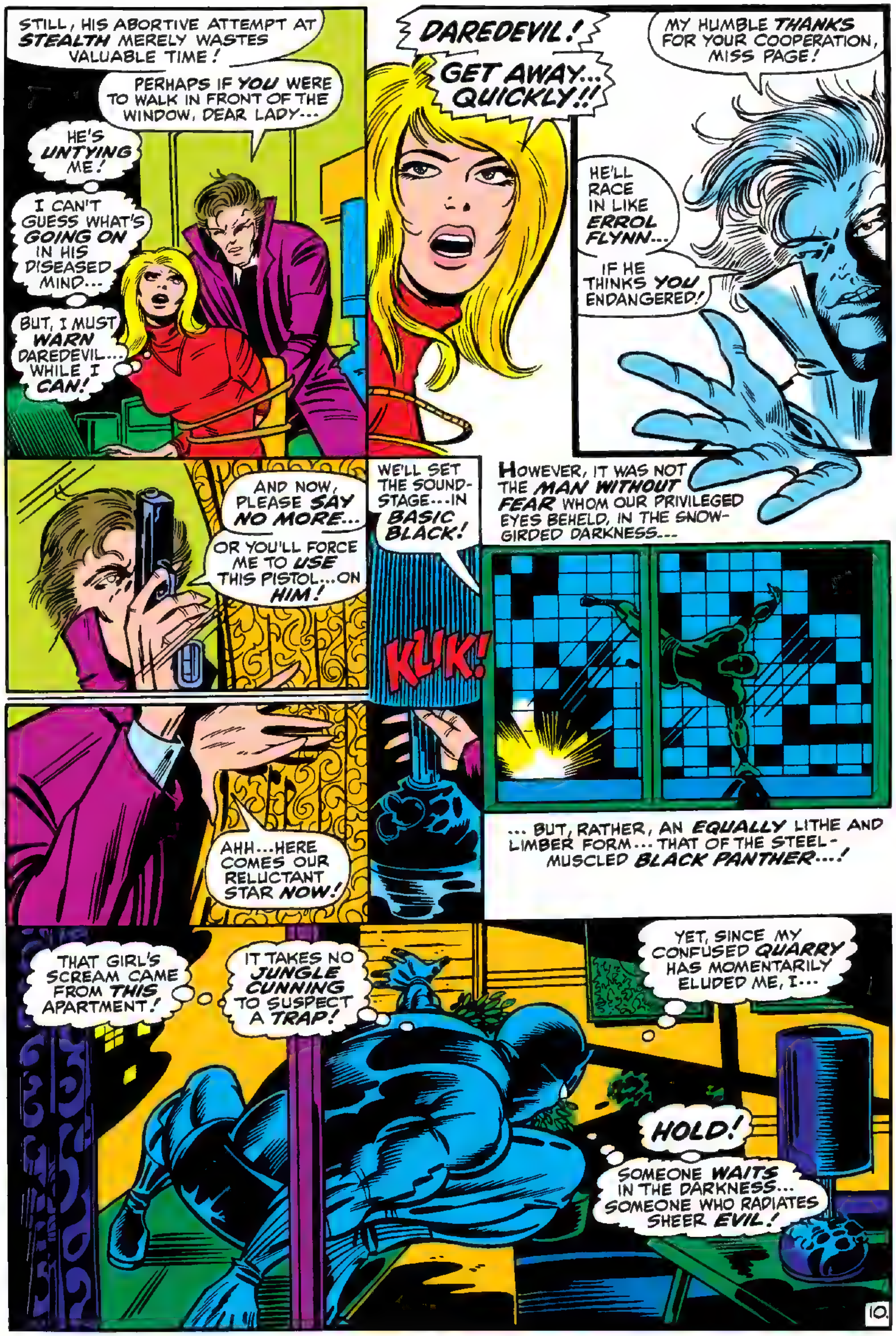
MURDOCK LIVES NEAR HERE...THUS...
WAIT!
I SEEM TO FEEL...SOME HIDDEN PRESENCE...
ALMOST AT MY VERY SHOULDER!
DAREDEVIL!
IS THAT YOU??
NO ANSWER... AND YET, MY JUNGLE SENSES ARE NEVER WRONG!
SOMEONE LURKS IN THESE SHADOWS...NOT MOVING...NOT EVEN BREATHING!
HOLD! THAT MOVEMENT...BEHIND ME...!
YOU'RE FAST, ASSASSIN!
BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH TO AVOID...
--THIS!!
SKOD!!
UNNHHH!
WHILE, NOT FAR AWAY, IN THE RECENTLY RAN-SACKED APARTMENT OF OUR STILL-UNSEEN HERO---
YOU MUST TELL ME...WHO ARE YOU---
AND WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE...AT GUNPOINT?
EASY, MISS PAGE!
REST ASSURED... THERE IS METHOD IN THE SEEMING MADNESS OF STARR SAXON!
WE ARE WAITING... WAITING FOR DARE-DEVIL!
FOR DARE-DEVIL?
IN MATT MURDOCK'S APARTMENT?
NOT SO UNLIKELY A PLACE AS YOU SUS-PECT, LOVELY LADY!
6

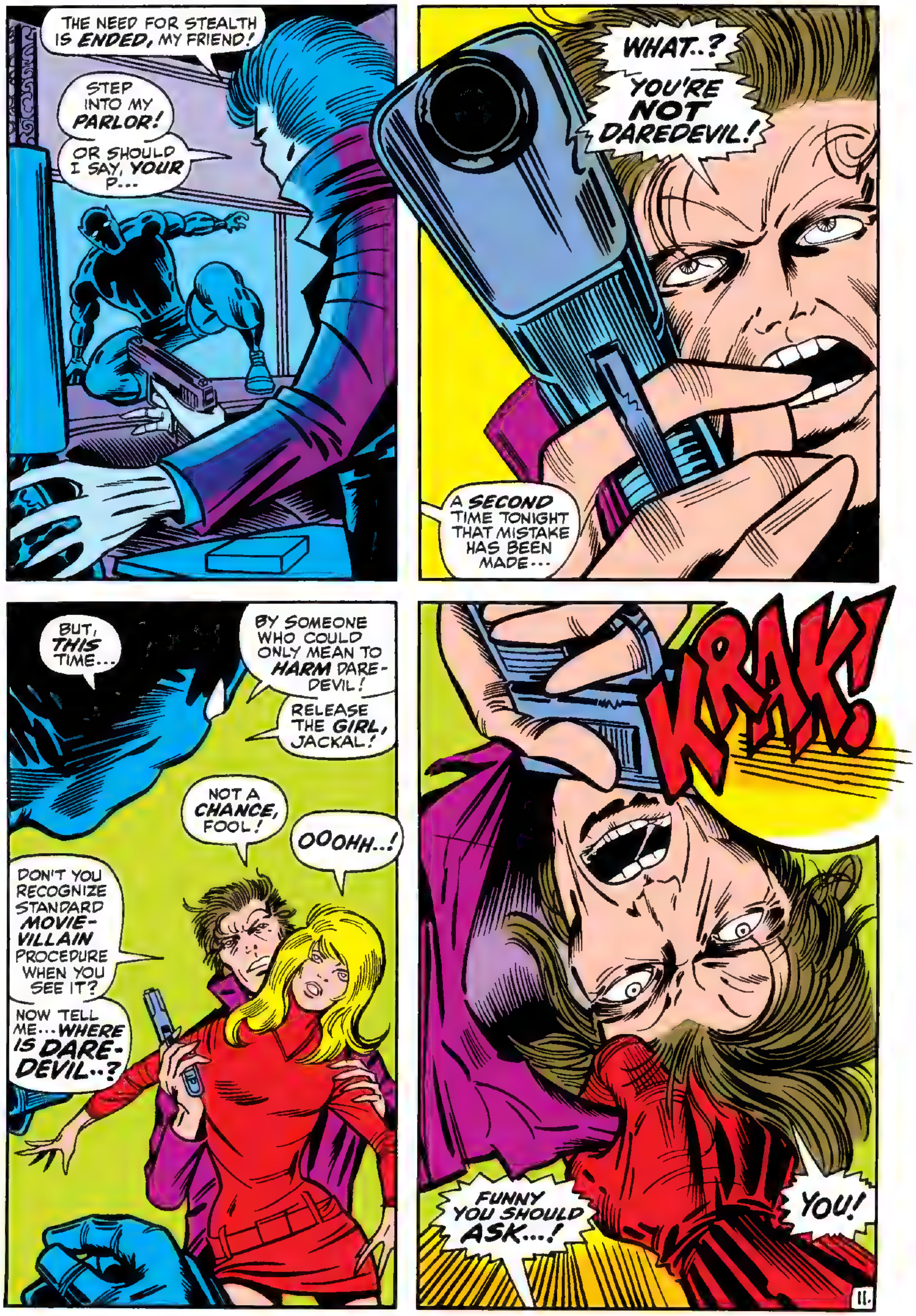


WH..WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I KNOW THAT MATT'S BROTHER WAS THE ORIGINAL DAREDEVIL!
BUT MIKE MURDOCK...IS DEAD!
AH, BUT I DO, MISS PAGE...
EVEN I DON'T KNOW THE IDENTITY... OF THE NEW DAREDEVIL!
THERE IS NO REASON TO TELL MY CAPTIVATING CAPTIVE...
THAT I'VE LEARNED MATT MURDOCK HIMSELF IS DD!
THE FEWER THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THAT...
THE SIMPLER IT WILL BE...TO BLACKMAIL THE SCARLET SWASHBUCKLER!
YOU MADMAN!
DON'T JUST SIT THERE... SMIRKING LIKE THE VILLAIN IN A BAD "B" MOVIE!
HAVE NO FEAR, DEAR LADY...
YOU WON'T DIE... AT LEAST NOT OF BOREDOM!
I KNOW THAT THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR WILL SOON BE HERE!
AND THEN THINGS WILL GET VERY INTERESTING INDEED...!
...NOW I'VE DONE IT!
IN MY DELIRIUM... I STRUCK DOWN THE BLACK PANTHER!
BUT, THE SHOCK CLEARED MY HEAD AGAIN!
THANK THE LORD ... HE'S ONLY STUNNED!
CAN'T WAIT AROUND...TO FIND OUT WHY HE WAS LOOKING FOR DD!
'CAUSE NOW I RECALL...I LEFT KAREN... WITH STARR SAXON!
SO, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I HATE THE IDEA...
DAREDEVIL MUST LIVE AGAIN!
7.

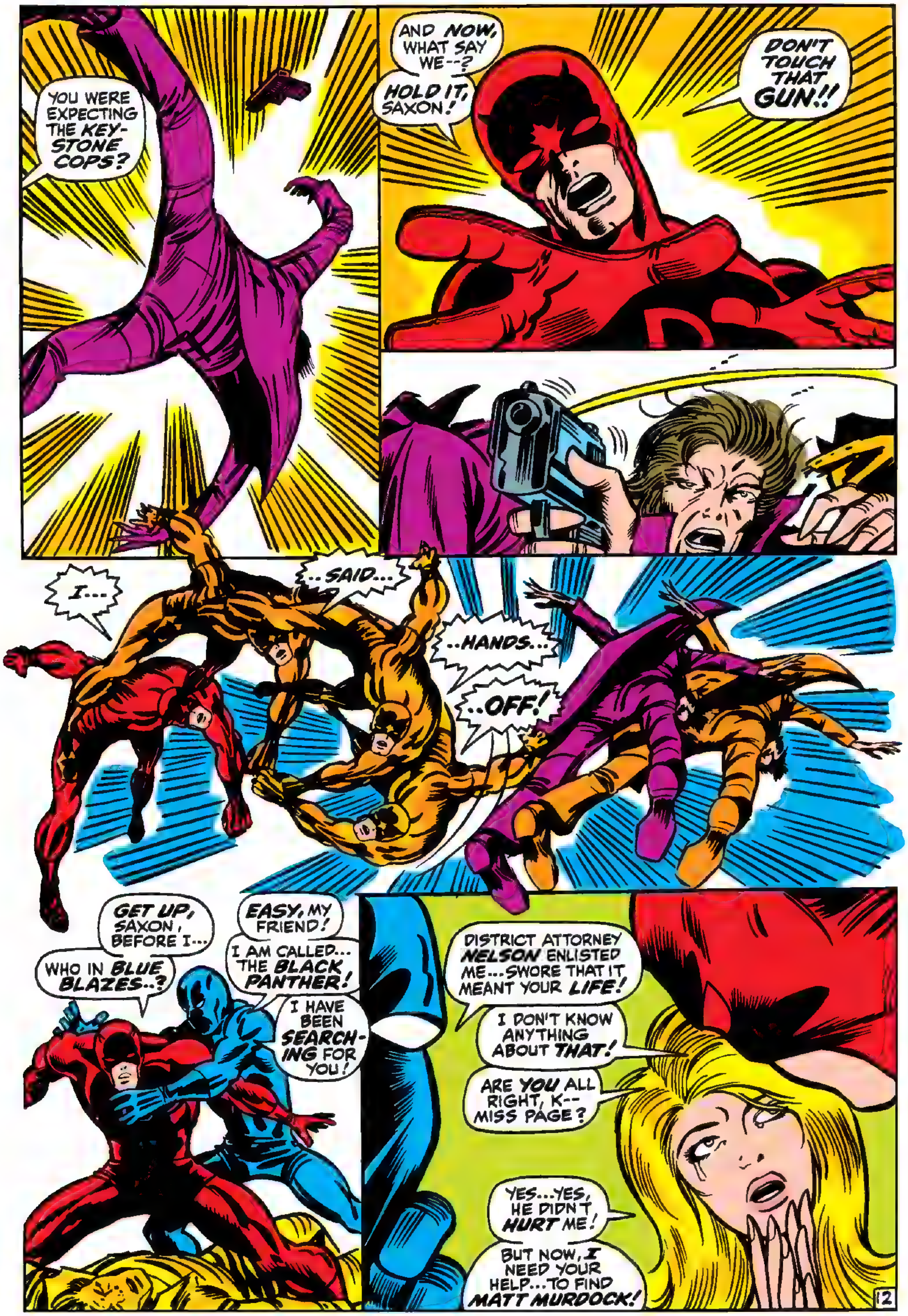

TRIED TO GIVE UP BEING DAREDEVIL... FOREVER!
NOW, TO SAVE KAREN, I'VE GOT TO DON THAT COSTUME ONCE MORE...
THE COSTUME I LEFT AT...
...MY APARTMENT!
HE IS... GONE NOW!
THE ONE WHO STRUCK ME...WAS TOO WEAK TO DO ME REAL HARM!
I COULD NOT SEE MY ATTACKER'S FACE!
BUT, I HEARD HIS VOICE...
HEARD THE WORDS HE UTTERED!
AND I KNOW THAT, WHOEVER OWNS THAT FLEETING FORM...
WHICH EVEN NOW RACES JUST AHEAD OF ME...
...THAT MAN IS DAREDEVIL!
BUT, HE THOUGHT ME AN ENEMY... AN ASSASSIN!
THUS, UNTIL I AM NEAR ENOUGH TO REASON WITH HIM...
HE MUST NOT SUSPECT HE IS BEING FOLLOWED!
8

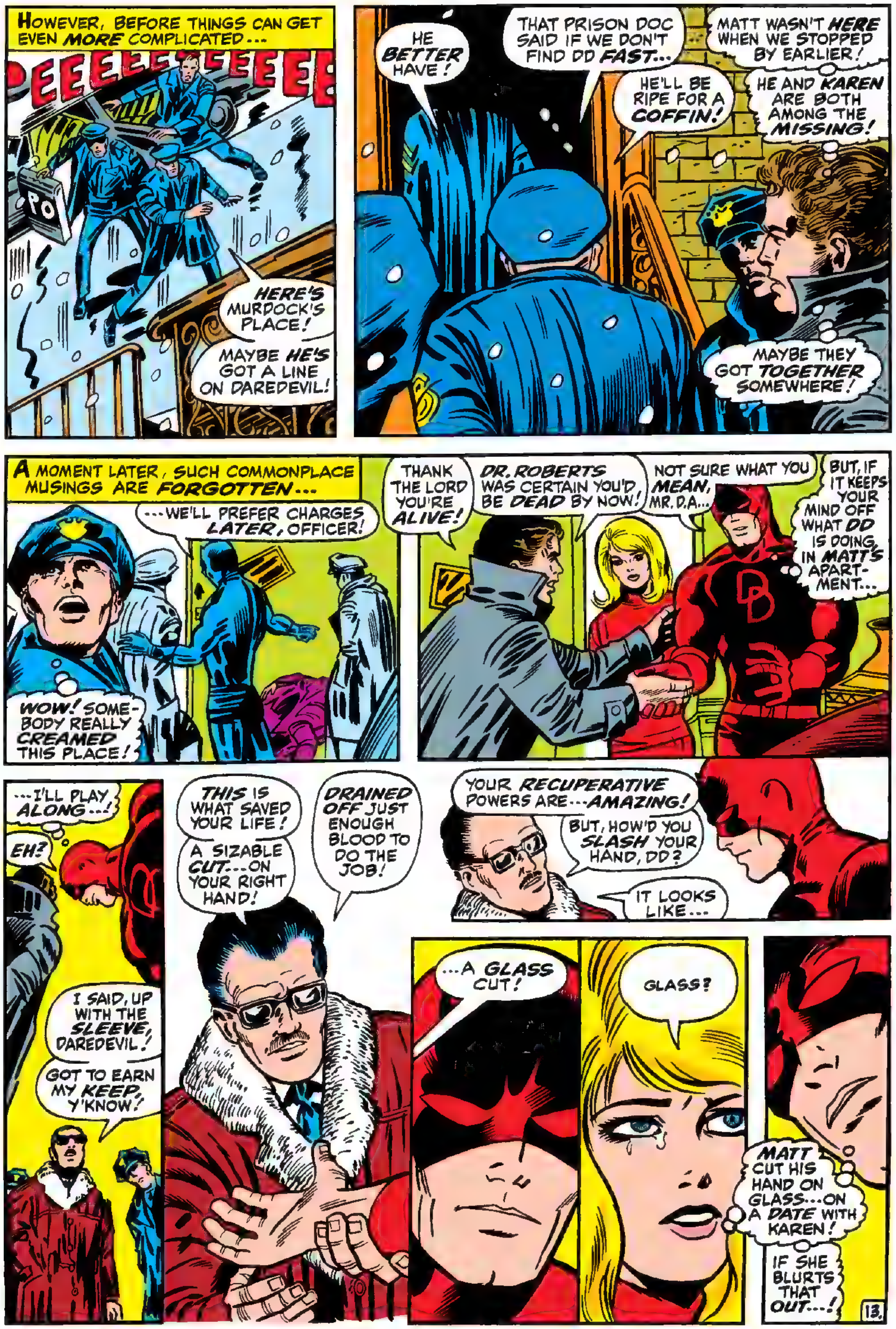

BUT, IT IS ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP HIM IN SIGHT!
HE IS RAPIDLY RECOVERING FROM THAT WHICH WEAKENED HIM BEFORE!
PERHAPS DAREDEVIL IS MORE THAN A MERE COSTUMED ACROBAT...!
MY APARTMENT HOUSE IS STRAIGHT AHEAD!
BUT, I DON'T DARE JUST GO CHARGING IN...
NOT WHILE SAXON SUSPECTS MY IDENTITY!
MUST CHECK THE PLACE OUT FIRST!
AND, I CAN THANK MY LUCKLESS STARS THAT I DID!
THRU THE SILENT SNOW-FALL, I CAN DETECT TWO PULSES...TWO HEARTBEATS!
ONE BELONGS TO SAXON...THE OTHER TO...
KAREN!
THAT TEARS IT... I'VE GOT TO RESCUE HER QUICKLY...
THOUGH IT MEANS REVEALING TO HER THAT MATT IS DD!
...IF SAXON HASN'T ALREADY CLUED HER IN ON THAT POINT!
BUT, EVEN AS OUR SIGHTLESS HERO WEIGHS HIS DILEMMA, THE KEEN EYES OF STARR SAXON PIERCE THE GATHERING DARKNESS...
THAT WITLESS FOOL!
DOES HE THINK I CAN'T SEE HIM OUT THERE...
SKULKING ABOUT LIKE LON CHANEY ...LISTENING... LURKING?
9.


STILL, HIS ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT STEALTH MERELY WASTES VALUABLE TIME!
PERHAPS IF YOU WERE TO WALK IN FRONT OF THE WINDOW, DEAR LADY...
HE'S UNTYING ME!
I CAN'T GUESS WHAT'S GOING ON IN HIS DISEASED MIND...
BUT, I MUST WARN DAREDEVIL... WHILE I CAN!
DAREDEVIL!
GET AWAY... QUICKLY!!
MY HUMBLE THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION, MISS PAGE!
HE'LL RACE IN LIKE ERROL FLYNN...
IF HE THINKS YOU ENDANGERED!
AND NOW, PLEASE SAY NO MORE...
OR YOU'LL FORCE ME TO USE THIS PISTOL...ON HIM!
WE'LL SET THE SOUND-STAGE...IN BASIC BLACK!
KLIK!
HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR WHOM OUR PRIVILEGED EYES BEHELD, IN THE SNOW-GIRDED DARKNESS...
AHH...HERE COMES OUR RELUCTANT STAR NOW!
... BUT, RATHER, AN EQUALLY LITHE AND LIMBER FORM... THAT OF THE STEEL-MUSCLED BLACK PANTHER...!
THAT GIRL'S SCREAM CAME FROM THIS APARTMENT!
IT TAKES NO JUNGLE CUNNING TO SUSPECT A TRAP!
YET, SINCE MY CONFUSED QUARRY HAS MOMENTARILY ELUDED ME, I...
HOLD!
SOMEONE WAITS IN THE DARKNESS... SOMEONE WHO RADIATES SHEER EVIL!
10.



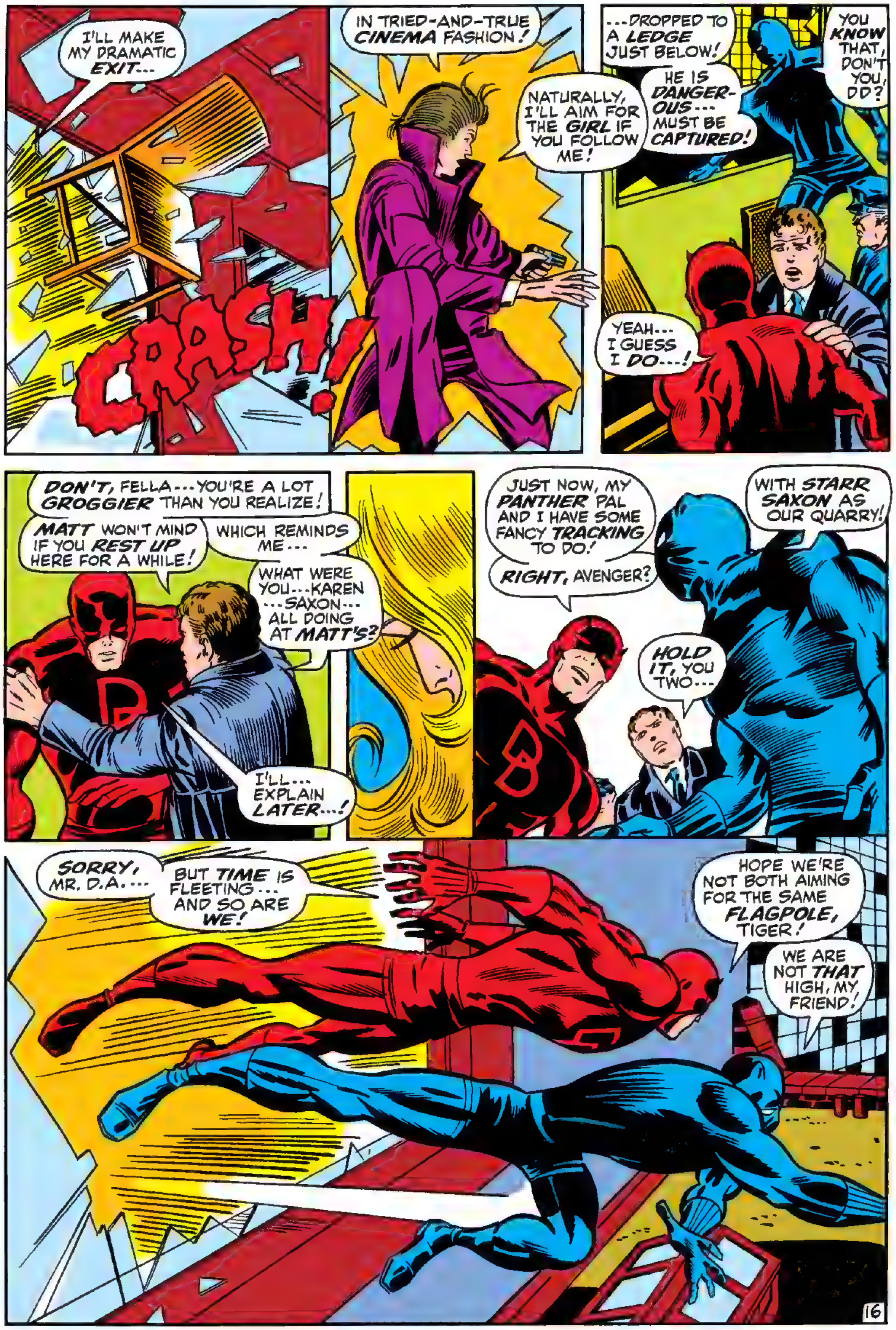
THE NEED FOR STEALTH IS ENDED, MY FRIEND!
STEP INTO MY PARLOR!
OR SHOULD I SAY, YOUR P...
WHAT..? YOU'RE NOT DAREDEVIL!
A SECOND TIME TONIGHT THAT MISTAKE HAS BEEN MADE...
BUT, THIS TIME...
BY SOMEONE WHO COULD ONLY MEAN TO HARM DAREDEVIL!
RELEASE THE GIRL, JACKAL!
NOT A CHANCE, FOOL!
OOOHH..!
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE STANDARD MOVIE-VILLAIN PROCEDURE WHEN YOU SEE IT?
NOW TELL ME...WHERE IS DAREDEVIL..?
KRAK!
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK...!
YOU!
11.

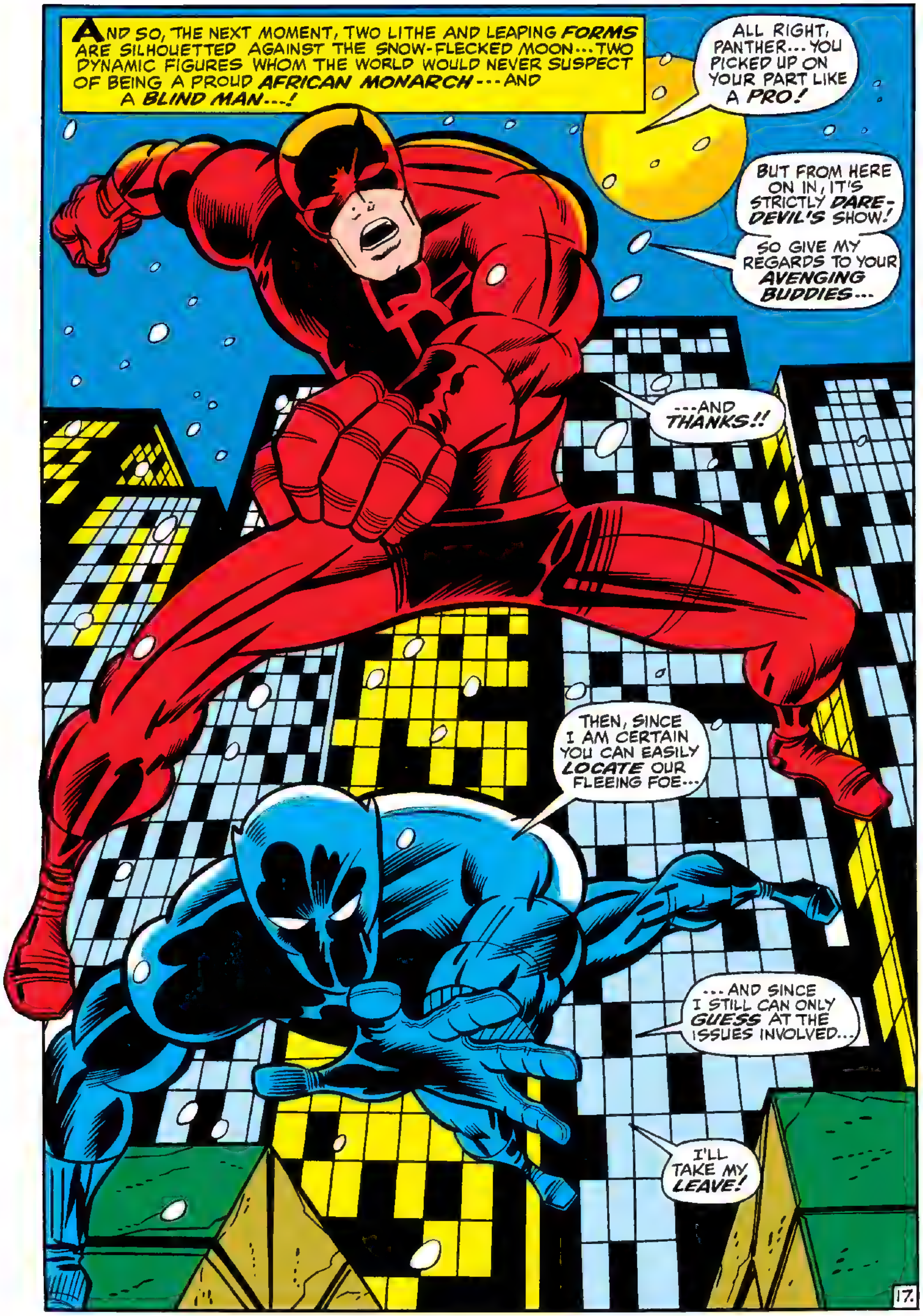

YOU WERE EXPECTING THE KEY-STONE COPS?
AND NOW, WHAT SAY WE--?
HOLD IT, SAXON!
DON'T TOUCH THAT GUN!!
I...
..SAID...
..HANDS...
..OFF!
GET UP, SAXON, BEFORE I...
WHO IN BLUE BLAZES..?
EASY, MY FRIEND!
I AM CALLED... THE BLACK PANTHER!
I HAVE BEEN SEARCH-ING FOR YOU!
DISTRICT ATTORNEY NELSON ENLISTED ME...SWORE THAT IT MEANT YOUR LIFE!
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, K-- MISS PAGE?
YES...YES, HE DIDN'T HURT ME!
BUT NOW, I NEED YOUR HELP...TO FIND MATT MURDOCK!
12


HOWEVER, BEFORE THINGS CAN GET EVEN MORE COMPLICATED...
EEEEEEEEEEE
HERE'S MURDOCK'S PLACE!
MAYBE HE'S GOT A LINE ON DAREDEVIL!
HE BETTER HAVE!
THAT PRISON DOC SAID IF WE DON'T FIND DD FAST...
HE'LL BE RIPE FOR A COFFIN!
MATT WASN'T HERE WHEN WE STOPPED BY EARLIER!
HE AND KAREN ARE BOTH AMONG THE MISSING!
MAYBE THEY GOT TOGETHER SOMEWHERE!
A MOMENT LATER, SUCH COMMONPLACE MUSINGS ARE FORGOTTEN...
...WE'LL PREFER CHARGES LATER, OFFICER!
WOW! SOMEBODY REALLY CREAMED THIS PLACE!
THANK THE LORD YOU'RE ALIVE!
DR. ROBERTS WAS CERTAIN YOU'D BE DEAD BY NOW!
NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN, MR. D.A...
BUT, IF IT KEEPS YOUR MIND OFF WHAT DD IS DOING IN MATT'S APARTMENT...
...I'LL PLAY ALONG...!
EH?
I SAID, UP WITH THE SLEEVE, DAREDEVIL!
GOT TO EARN MY KEEP, Y'KNOW!
THIS IS WHAT SAVED YOUR LIFE!
A SIZABLE CUT...ON YOUR RIGHT HAND!
DRAINED OFF JUST ENOUGH BLOOD TO DO THE JOB!
YOUR RECUPERATIVE POWERS ARE...AMAZING!
BUT, HOW'D YOU SLASH YOUR HAND, DD?
IT LOOKS LIKE...
...A GLASS CUT!
GLASS?
MATT CUT HIS HAND ON GLASS...ON A DATE WITH KAREN!
IF SHE BLURTS THAT OUT...!
13

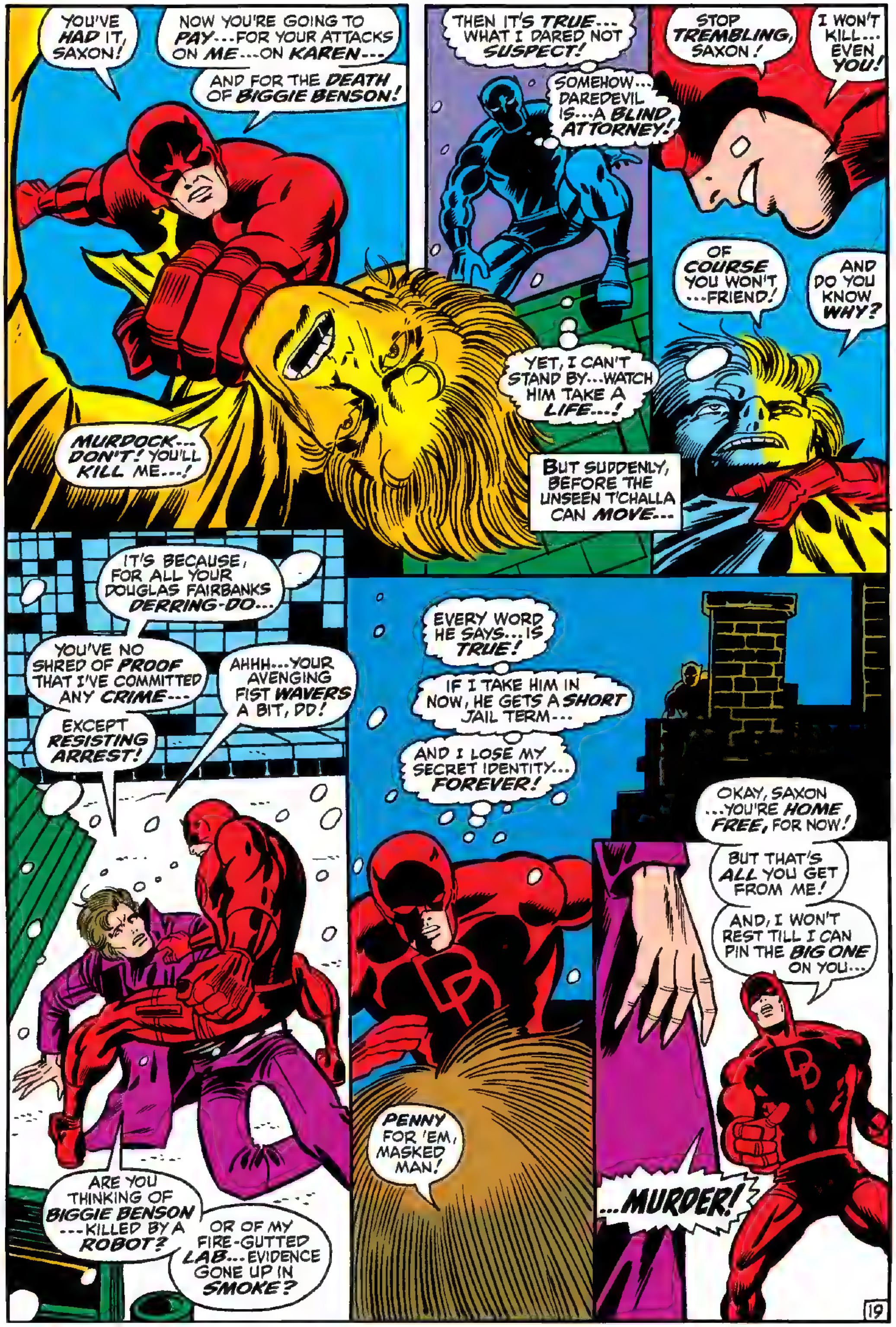
JUST THEN, A FORTUITOUS INTERRUPTION---
LOOK, DD...
MAYBE WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR HEALTH AND WELFARE ANY MORE!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS BOZO CATCHIN' 40 ON THE FLOOR?
THE PANTHER HERE SAID YOU AND HE WOULD PREFER CHARGES!
WHAT'RE YOU CHARGIN' HIM WITH?
NOTHING, CHIEF!
NOTHING??
IT WAS JUST ...A LITTLE MISUNDER-STANDING!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, PANTHER?
...YES...SO IT WOULD SEEM...!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT...AT THIS POINT, I THINK WE'LL ALL SETTLE FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!
WE'LL CART THIS GUY DOWN TO POLICE HOSPITAL, THOUGH!
I RATHER YOU DIDN'T!
I DOUBT IF IT WILL BE NECESSARY, OFFICER...
FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, THIS MAN WAS MERELY... STUNNED!
IN FACT, HIS BREATHING IS REGULAR--- ALMOST AS IF HE WERE FAK--
AAARRHH!
MAKE ONE MOVE--- AND THE GOOD DOCTOR DIES!
NO ONE IS TAKING IN STARR SAXON!
NO ONE!
14

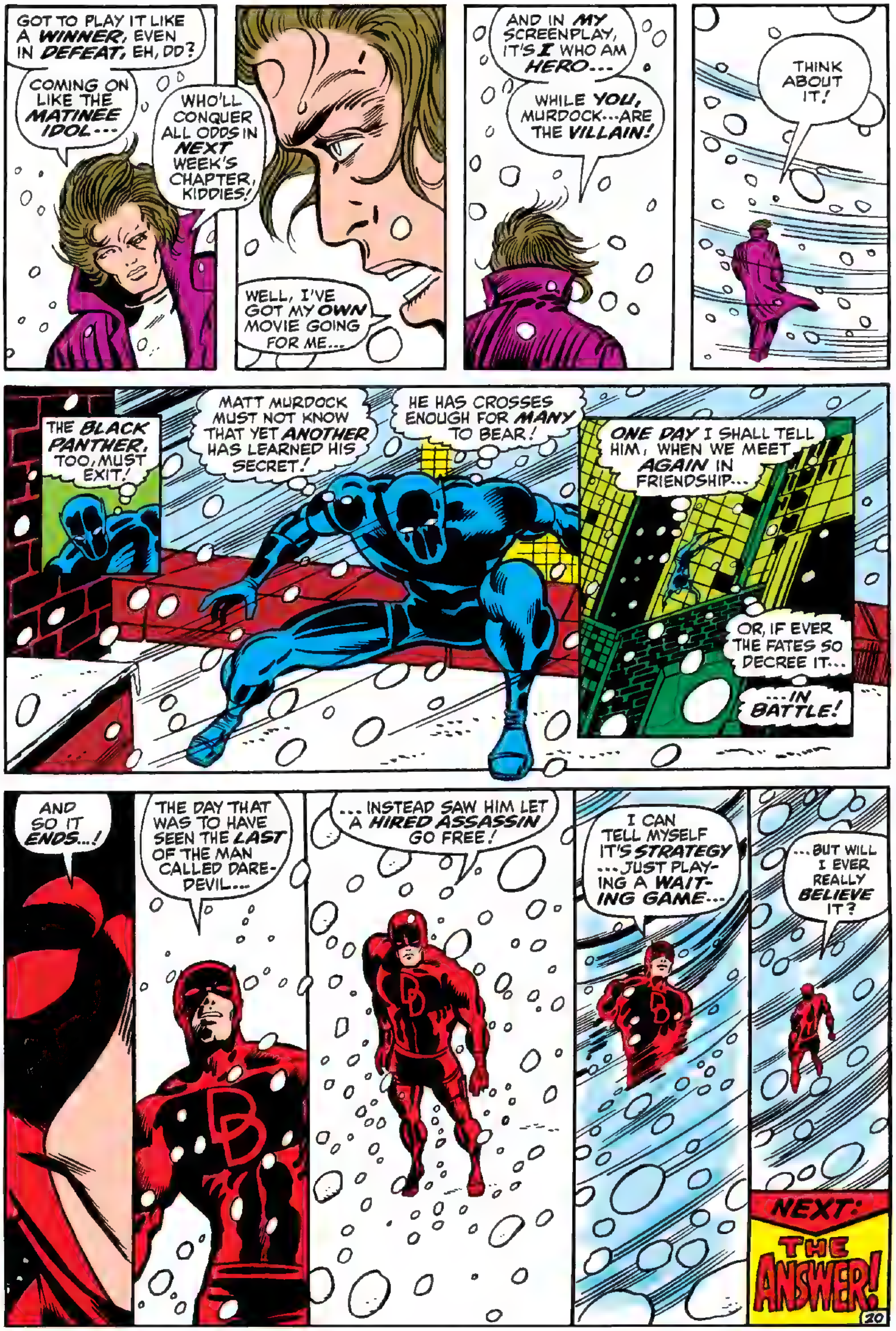
NOT THAT I REALLY NEED A HOSTAGE...
SINCE I HAD FALLEN ON TOP OF MY PISTOL!
HIS GUN!
WE FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT!
STAY BACK, KAREN!
HE'S GOT AN INSANE GLEAM IN HIS EYE...!
YOU MISTAKE THE GLEAM OF BRILLIANCE ...FOR THAT OF MADNESS!
I MERELY ENJOY DOING THINGS ...WITH A FLAIR!
I EVEN HAVE AN ALLY TO HOLD YOU AT BAY WHILE I ESCAPE...
DON'T I, DAREDEVIL?
DON'T I, DARE-DEVIL??
NO!
HE CAN'T TAKE US BOTH, PANTHER!
AGREED!
YOU'VE DISAPPOINTED ME, DD!
PERHAPS YOU MERELY NEED MORE TIME TO CONSIDER THE RAMIFICATIONS OF YOUR ACT!
YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM ME AGAIN, OLD FRIEND!
OR DON'T YOU READ ME?
I...READ YOU, SAXON!
THEN, BEFORE THE LOT OF YOU EDGE ANY CLOSER...


I'LL MAKE MY DRAMATIC EXIT...
CRASH!
IN TRIED-AND-TRUE CINEMA FASHION!
NATURALLY, I'LL AIM FOR THE GIRL IF YOU FOLLOW ME!
...DROPPED TO A LEDGE JUST BELOW!
HE IS DANGER-OUS... MUST BE CAPTURED!
YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU, DD?
YEAH... I GUESS I DO...!
DON'T, FELLA...YOU'RE A LOT GROGGIER THAN YOU REALIZE!
MATT WON'T MIND IF YOU REST UP HERE FOR A WHILE!
WHICH REMINDS ME...
WHAT WERE YOU...KAREN ...SAXON... ALL DOING AT MATT'S?
I'LL... EXPLAIN LATER...!
JUST NOW, MY PANTHER PAL AND I HAVE SOME FANCY TRACKING TO DO!
WITH STARR SAXON AS OUR QUARRY!
RIGHT, AVENGER?
HOLD IT, YOU TWO...
SORRY, MR. D.A....
BUT TIME IS FLEETING... AND SO ARE WE!
HOPE WE'RE NOT BOTH AIMING FOR THE SAME FLAGPOLE, TIGER!
WE ARE NOT THAT HIGH, MY FRIEND!
16


AND SO, THE NEXT MOMENT, TWO LITHE AND LEAPING FORMS ARE SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE SNOW-FLECKED MOON... TWO DYNAMIC FIGURES WHOM THE WORLD WOULD NEVER SUSPECT OF BEING A PROUD AFRICAN MONARCH --- AND A BLIND MAN---!
ALL RIGHT, PANTHER... YOU PICKED UP ON YOUR PART LIKE A PRO!
BUT FROM HERE ON IN, IT'S STRICTLY DARE-DEVIL'S SHOW!
SO GIVE MY REGARDS TO YOUR AVENGING BUDDIES...
---AND THANKS!!
THEN, SINCE I AM CERTAIN YOU CAN EASILY LOCATE OUR FLEEING FOE...
... AND SINCE I STILL CAN ONLY GUESS AT THE ISSUES INVOLVED...
I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE!
17.

...BUT, SINCE YOUR FLIPPANCY DOES NOT MASK YOUR TORMENT FROM ME---
AND SINCE YOU MAY YET BE SLIGHTLY ILL...
I SHALL RETRACE MY STEPS ---AND FOLLOW YOU!
GLAD THE BLACK PANTHER PROVED SO DOCILE!
AFTER THE WAY I ACTED BACK THERE...
INDECISIVE... FULL OF UN-CERTAINTY..!
WAIT!
THERE HE IS...!
STARR SAXON!
YOU'RE A FOOL, MURDOCK!
YOU NEED TIME TO THINK...TO DECIDE!
NO... NO...
KRAK!
STAY BACK!!
PING!
KUH-PWING!
18


YOU'VE HAD IT, SAXON!
NOW YOU'RE GOING TO PAY...FOR YOUR ATTACKS ON ME...ON KAREN...
AND FOR THE DEATH OF BIGGIE BENSON!
MURDOCK... DON'T! YOU'LL KILL ME...!
THEN IT'S TRUE... WHAT I DARED NOT SUSPECT!
SOMEHOW... DAREDEVIL IS...A BLIND ATTORNEY!
YET, I CAN'T STAND BY...WATCH HIM TAKE A LIFE...!
STOP TREMBLING, SAXON!
I WON'T KILL... EVEN YOU!
OF COURSE YOU WON'T ...FRIEND!
AND DO YOU KNOW WHY?
BUT SUDDENLY, BEFORE THE UNSEEN T'CHALLA CAN MOVE...
IT'S BECAUSE, FOR ALL YOUR DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS DERRING-DO...
YOU'VE NO SHRED OF PROOF THAT I'VE COMMITTED ANY CRIME...
EXCEPT RESISTING ARREST!
AHHH...YOUR AVENGING FIST WAVERS A BIT, DD!
ARE YOU THINKING OF BIGGIE BENSON ---KILLED BY A ROBOT?
OR OF MY FIRE-GUTTED LAB...EVIDENCE GONE UP IN SMOKE?
EVERY WORD HE SAYS...IS TRUE!
IF I TAKE HIM IN NOW, HE GETS A SHORT JAIL TERM...
AND I LOSE MY SECRET IDENTITY... FOREVER!
PENNY FOR 'EM, MASKED MAN!
OKAY, SAXON ...YOU'RE HOME FREE, FOR NOW!
BUT THAT'S ALL YOU GET FROM ME!
AND, I WON'T REST TILL I CAN PIN THE BIG ONE ON YOU...
...MURDER!
19



While Daredevil and the Avengers' exploits continue in America and beyond, T'Challa returns to Wakanda…

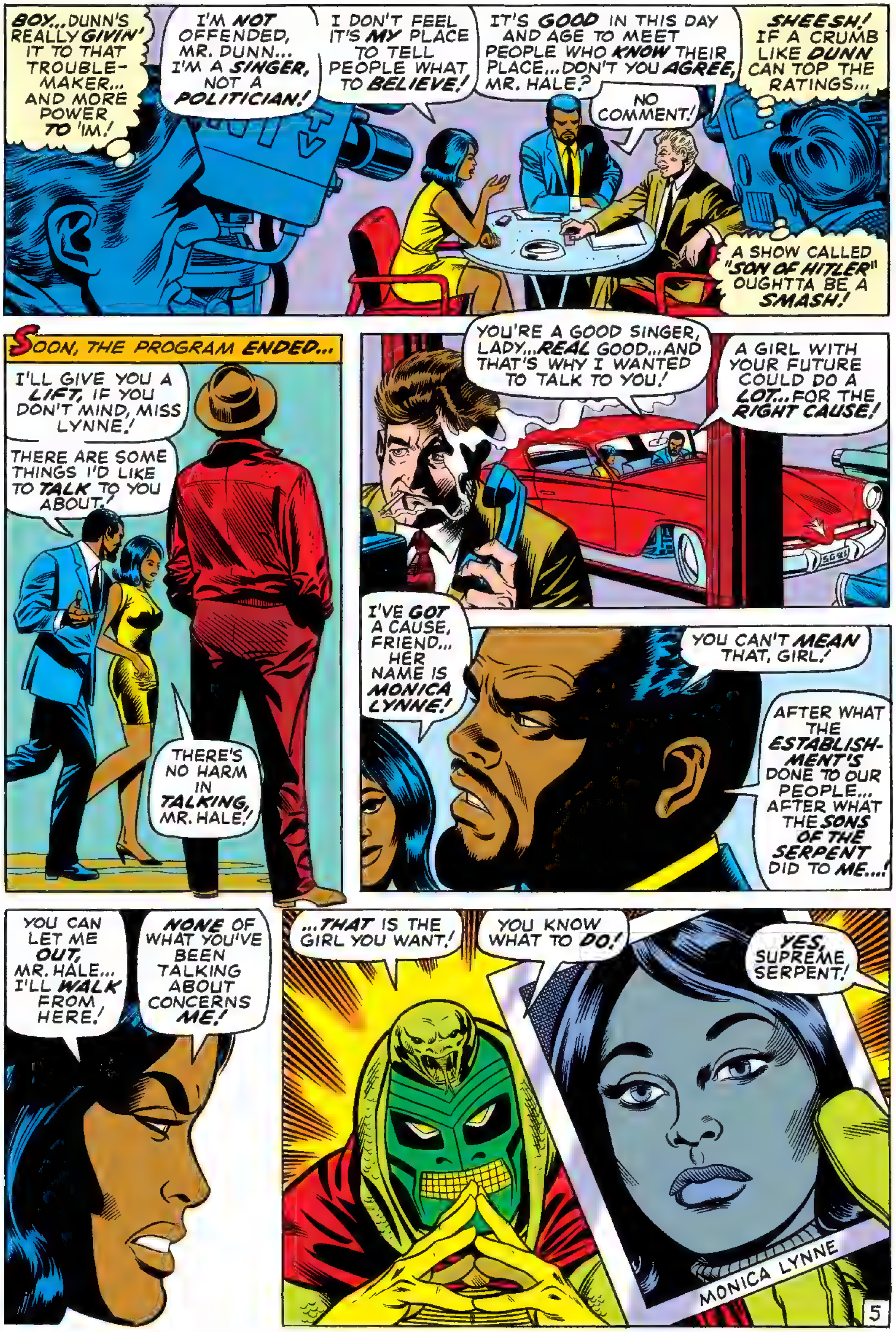
AVENGERS
15¢
73
FEB
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
WHETHER HE LIVES... OR WHETHER HE DIES... THE PANTHER FIGHTS ALONE!!
SONS OF THE SERPENT STRIKE!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
THE STING OF THE SERPENT
WE WHO WEAR THE SERPENT'S ROBES ARE THE DESTINED MASTERS OF AMERICA!
AS THE FIRST SERPENT DROVE ADAM AND EVE FROM EDEN...SO SHALL WE DRIVE FROM THIS LAND THE UNFIT... THE FOREIGN-BORN ...THE INFERIOR!
WE ARE... THE SONS OF THE SERPENT!!
A SHOCK-FOLLOWS-SHOCK SAGA BY:
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • FRANK GIACOIA ARTIST
SAM GRAINGER EMBELLISHER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER

NIGHT CLOAKS THE SECRET, SINISTER TABLEAU THAT YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED! IN AFRICA, HOWEVER, A BLAZING SUN BEATS MERCILESSLY DOWN,...AS A SLEEK AND SILVERY AIRCRAFT LUNGES INTO THE SKY...!
THEY CALL IT THE DARK CONTINENT... BUT NOW IT BLAZES WITH THE PULSING LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE ...OF SELF-AWARENESS!
YET, SOMEHOW, IT IS NO LONGER HOME TO...THE BLACK PANTHER!
AND, BRIEF HOURS AFTERWARD...
THIS IS HOME NOW TO T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA!
A LAND OF COMPLEXITY AND CONTRAST...OF TRIUMPH AND OF SUDDEN TRAGEDY!
U.S. AIR FORCE
BUT, ABOVE ALL, A LAND AS RICH WITH BECKONING PROMISE AS ANY NEWBORN NATION!
LONG WEEKS HAVE PASSED SINCE I LAST BEHELD MY ADOPTED HOMELAND!
STILL, I IMAGINE IT HAS CHANGED BUT LITTLE!
PERHAPS, KING OF ALL THE WAKANDAS... AND YET, SOME THINGS MAY HAVE CHANGED MORE THAN OTHERS...!
SHROOM!

THERE MAY'VE BEEN PEOPLE IN THERE WHEN THAT BOMB BLEW!
GET THAT NO. 3 HOSE OVER THERE... ON THE DOUBLE!
YES, SIR!
...HERE'S WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, CAPTAIN!
THE SIGN OF THE SERPENT! IT FIGURES!
THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT BUREAU HAD ITS OFFICE IN THAT BUILDING!
BOY, WON'T MONTAGUE HALE HAVE A FIELD-DAY ON HIS TALK-SHOW TONIGHT!
...WE OF THIS PROGRAM DEMAND THAT AN INVESTIGATION BE MADE OF THE SO-CALLED SONS OF THE SERPENT!
UNTIL THEN, NO MAN...BLACK OR WHITE...WILL BE TRULY SAFE!
AND ESPECIALLY BLACK, MR. HALE!
NEW YORK
FINAL
BLACK TV PERSONALITY ATTACKED BY 'SERPENTS'
ASSAULT BELIEVED CAUSED BY CALL FOR INVESTIGATION OF GROUP'S ACTIVITIES!
HERE HE COMES!
REMEMBER... HE'S NOT TO BE KILLED... ONLY ROUGHED UP!
OF COURSE...!
HOW ELSE WOULD YOU TEACH ANYTHING TO... HIS KIND?
3

HIS SPONSORS HAD WANTED CONTROVERSY... BUT NOT THAT MUCH, IT SEEMS... SO MONTAGUE HALE LOST HIS TV FORUM...
WNNT-TV PRESENTS THE DAN DUNN SHOW
THE DAN DUNN SHOW SPECIAL GUEST TONIGHT MR. MONTAGUE HALE
BUT, A RIVAL NETWORK HAD AN EQUALLY CONTROVERSIAL LATE-NIGHT HOST... THUS IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THE TWO GIANTS WOULD MEET, AS MILLIONS OF INSOMNIAC AMERICANS WATCHED...!
...NOW, MR. HALE, TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS ALLEGED ASSAULT... FROM WHICH YOU RECEIVED SUCH MICROSCOPIC BRUISES!
I'LL IGNORE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THAT, MR. DUNN...
...SINCE YOU'RE KNOWN TO BE THE FOREMOST BIGOT IN AMERICA TODAY!
STICKS AND STONES, MR. HALE!
MY ATTACKERS WERE YOUR KIND OF PEOPLE, DUNN...
THE SCUM OF TODAY'S SOCIETY... THE SONS OF THE SERPENT!
THERE'VE BEEN HATE-GROUPS IN THIS COUNTRY BEFORE, BUT NOTHING ON THE MASSIVE SCALE OF--
AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO INTERRUPT, MR. HALE!
WE HAVE A GUEST OF SEPARATE BUT EQUAL IMPORTANCE RIGHT NOW...!
THEN, AS HALE WRITHED BENEATH THE CALCULATED INSULT... AND AS MILLIONS OF VIEWERS CHOSE SIDES BETWEEN THE TWO MEN DEPENDING UPON THEIR PREVIOUS PREJUDICES... DAN DUNN DID HIS THING...!
...AND NOW, SOMETHING NEW ON THE MUSIC HORIZON...
MISS MONICA LYNNE!
You say we must part... But I can't tell my heart...
...And when the last dance is thru... And there's no one to turn to... You'll think about me...!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU...!
WELCOME, MISS LYNNE... AND DON'T MIND MR. HALE'S SEEMING INDIFFERENCE!
HIS WOUNDS ONLY HURT WHEN HE APPLAUDS!
KLAP KLAP
4

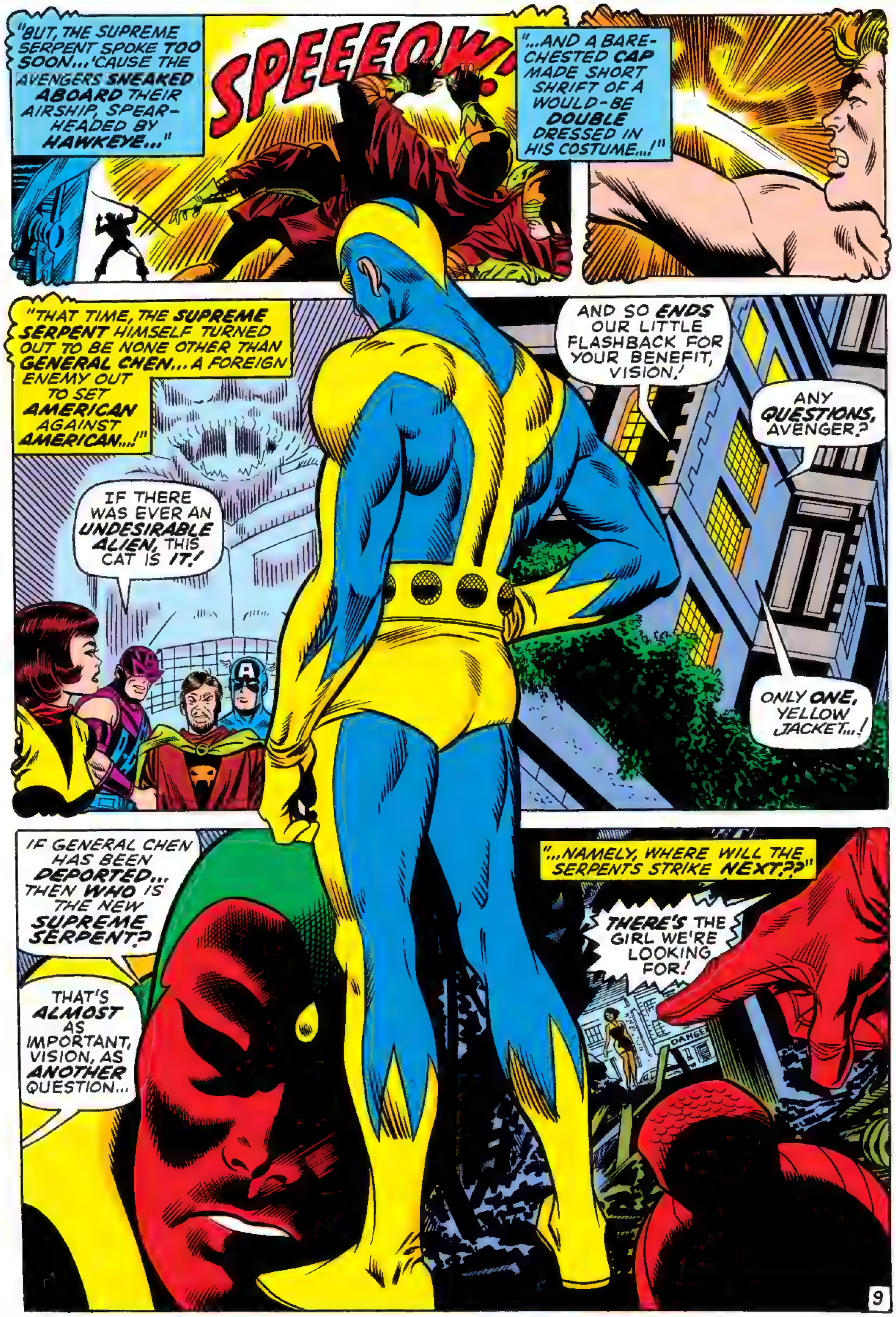


BOY...DUNN'S REALLY GIVIN' IT TO THAT TROUBLE-MAKER... AND MORE POWER TO 'IM!
I'M NOT OFFENDED, MR. DUNN... I'M A SINGER, NOT A POLITICIAN!
I DON'T FEEL IT'S MY PLACE TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT TO BELIEVE!
IT'S GOOD IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO MEET PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR PLACE,...DON'T YOU AGREE, MR. HALE?
NO COMMENT!
SHEESH! IF A CRUMB LIKE DUNN CAN TOP THE RATINGS...
A SHOW CALLED "SON OF HITLER" OUGHTTA BE A SMASH!
SOON, THE PROGRAM ENDED...
I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT, IF YOU DON'T MIND, MISS LYNNE!
THERE ARE SOME THINGS I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT!
THERE'S NO HARM IN TALKING, MR. HALE!
YOU'RE A GOOD SINGER, LADY...REAL GOOD...AND THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU!
A GIRL WITH YOUR FUTURE COULD DO A LOT...FOR THE RIGHT CAUSE!
I'VE GOT A CAUSE, FRIEND... HER NAME IS MONICA LYNNE!
YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, GIRL!
AFTER WHAT THE ESTABLISH-MENT'S DONE TO OUR PEOPLE... AFTER WHAT THE SONS OF THE SERPENT DID TO ME...!
YOU CAN LET ME OUT, MR. HALE... I'LL WALK FROM HERE!
NONE OF WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT CONCERNS ME!
...THAT IS THE GIRL YOU WANT!
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!
YES, SUPREME SERPENT!
MONICA LYNNE

THEN GO--
--AND MAKE THE FIRST BOLD STEP ON OUR MARCH TOWARD... CONQUEST!!
THEN, A SECRET SIGNAL WAS GIVEN...A METALLIC HATCHWAY WAS OPENED... AND FROM WITHIN A STRANGE, SERPENTINE VESSEL, THERE POURED FORTH INTO THE MURKY WATERS A SPAWN AS HATEFUL, AS EVIL AS THE LEGIONS OF SATAN HIMSELF!
FOR, ONCE MORE, THE SONS OF THE SERPENT WERE ABROAD IN THE LAND...!
6

AND THAT'S THE WAY THINGS STAND IN THE LAND OF THE FREE, T'CHALLA, AS YOU VEER YOUR GLEAMING FLAGSHIP THRU THE STARLESS, SHROUDED SKY...AS YOUR SLEEK PROW KNIVES PAST THE STATUE OF A LIBERTY WHICH IS EVER AN IDEAL... AND SOMETIMES A REALITY...!
WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER FOR THE PANTHER TO GET BACK FROM AFRICA, YJ!
WHY DON'TCHA STOP PLAYIN' CAPTAIN VIDEO...
...AN' FILL THE VISION HERE IN ON THIS SONS OF THE SERPENT CREW WE'RE LOOKIN' INTO?
YOU START WITHOUT ME, BIG MAN...
AND I'LL CHIME IN IF AND WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF BREATH!
IT HAPPENED BACK WHEN HANK WAS STUCK AT THIS TEN-FOOT HEIGHT...
...AND HIS ASSISTANT WAS A REAL RIGHT SOUL-BROTHER NAMED BILL FOSTER!
THE SERPENTS DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEY WERE BITIN' OFF MORE THAN THEY COULD CHEW...!
JUST A MINUTE, YOU!
THE SONS OF THE SERPENT!
YOU CAN'T STOP ME NOW! I'M NEEDED INSIDE...!
GET HIM!!
7

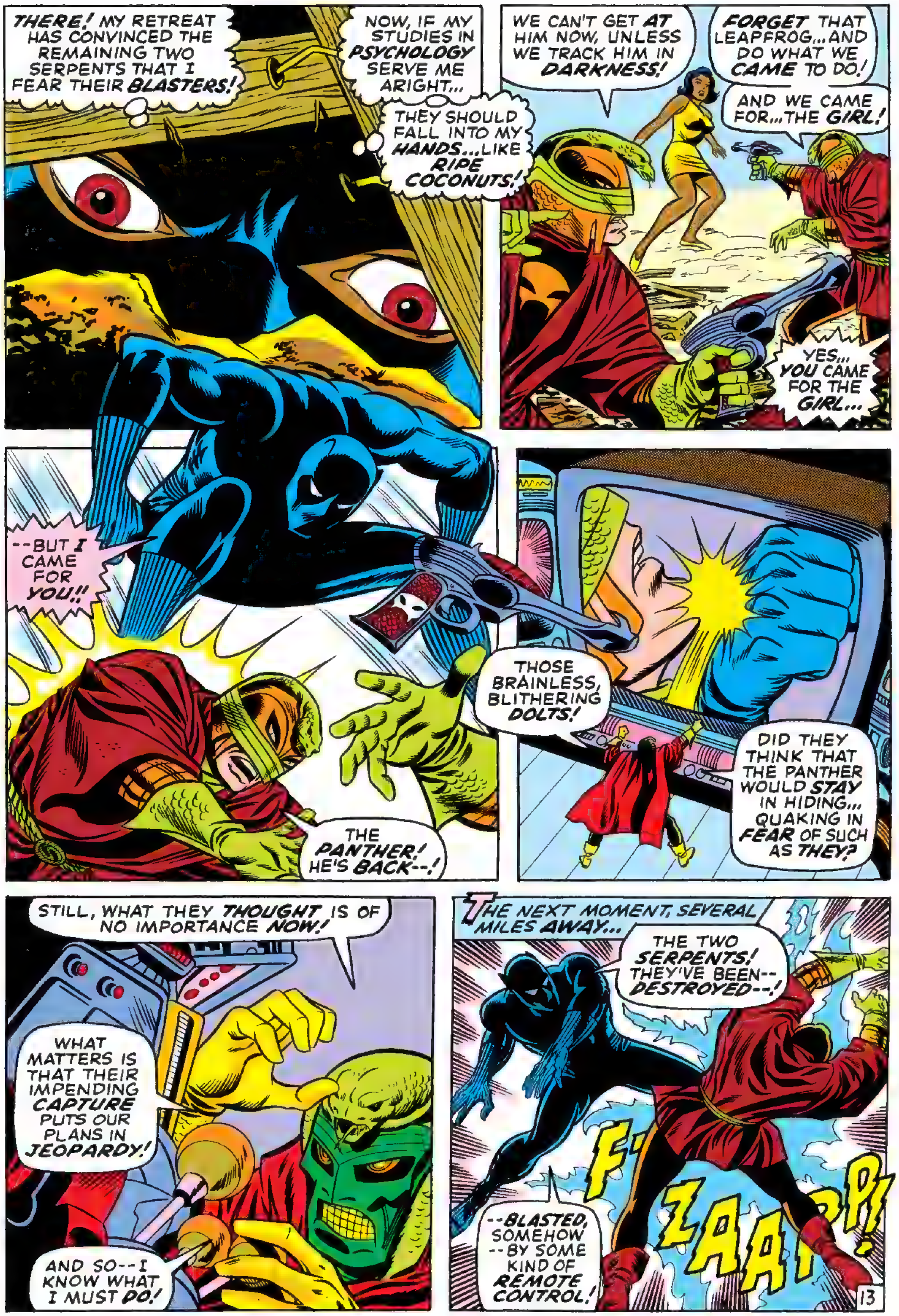
"IN FACT, THEY WERE SCARCELY OUTTA SIGHT, WHEN--"
BILL!
--AND THEY LEFT THIS BEHIND!
I SAY WE GO AFTER THEM...
I'LL BUY THAT, BIG FELLA!
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN LEARN ABOUT THEM FROM SHIELD!
"BUT, FOR THE MOMENT ANYHOW, THOSE SLIMY SNAKES WERE A STEP OR TWO AHEAD OF US...!"
WE ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES!
PUT PLAN K INTO ACTION ...AT ONCE!
"THAT PLAN CALLED FOR 'EM TO CAPTURE ANY ONE AVENGER...AND THAT ONE TURNED OUT TO BE CAPTAIN AMERICA!"
WE'VE KNOCKED ALL THE FIGHT OUT OF HIM!
THEN, IT IS TIME TO PUT PHASE TWO INTO OPERATION!
"BUT, PHASE TWO DIDN'T GO QUITE ACCORDIN' TO SCHEDULE...!"
"FINALLY, THOUGH, EVEN CAP COULDN'T STAND UP AGAINST ODDS OF 100-TO-1...!"
WITH YOU AS OUR PRISONER, THE AVENGERS ARE HELPLESS!
WATCH... AND LEARN WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR THEM!
"LET ME TAKE OVER FROM THERE, CLINT! THE NEXT STEP OF THE SERPENTS' PLAN WAS TO GIVE US THEIR ULTIMATUM! WE WERE TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE WERE JOINING THEM...THAT WE FAVORED THEIR RACIST VIEWS...OR ELSE!"
DISOBEY THESE EDICTS, AND YOU SHALL NEVER SEE CAPTAIN AMERICA ALIVE AGAIN!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, GOLIATH?
PLAY ALONG WITH THEM... FOR THE TIME BEING!
--SO, IN THE MOST STARTLING TURNABOUT OF THE CENTURY, THE AVENGERS HAVE REFUSED TO HELP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SERPENTS...!
WE HAVE WON!
THE ENTIRE NATION WILL SOON BE OURS!
8

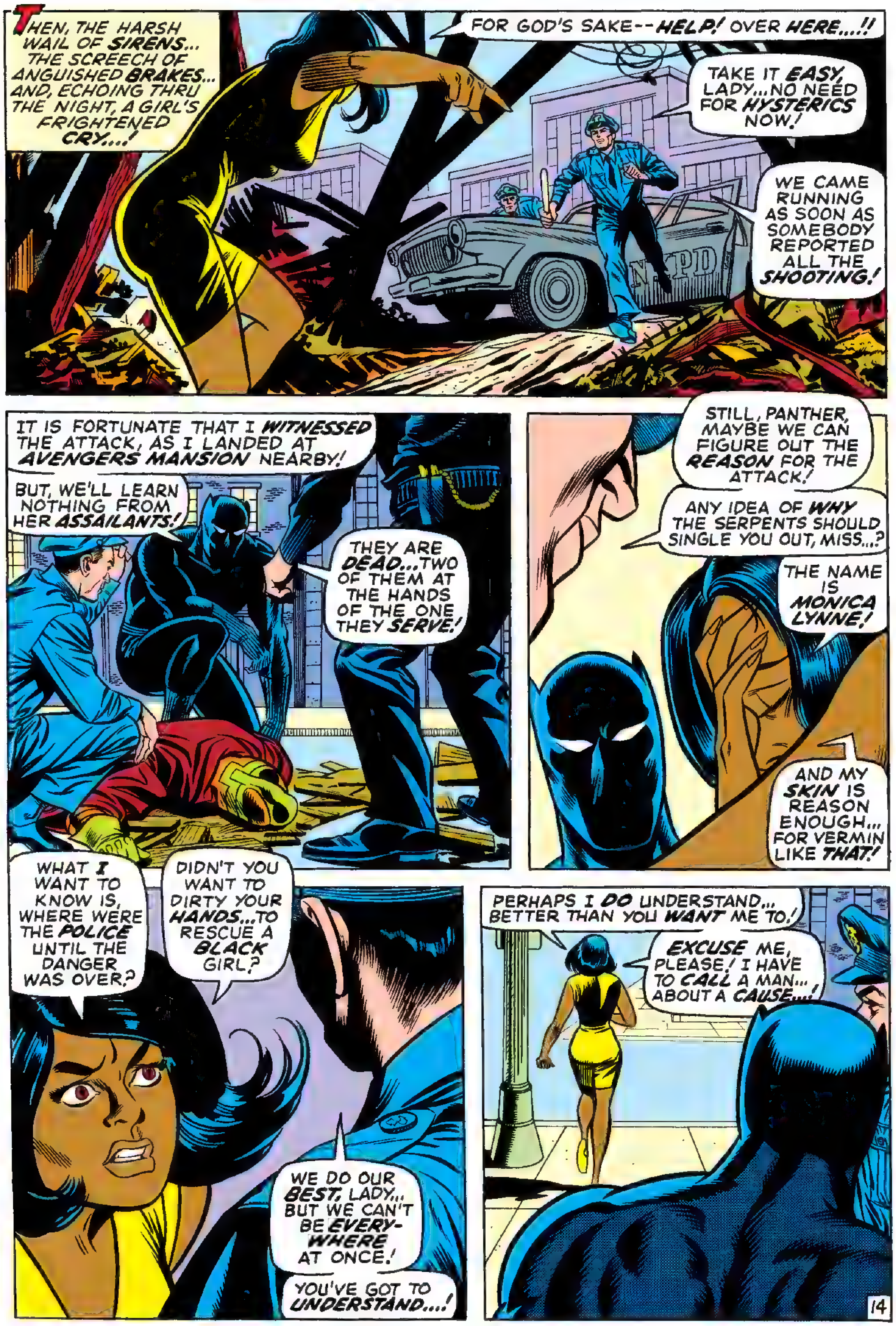

"BUT, THE SUPREME SERPENT SPOKE TOO SOON... 'CAUSE THE AVENGERS SNEAKED ABOARD THEIR AIRSHIP, SPEAR-HEADED BY HAWKEYE..."
SPEEEOW!
"...AND A BARE-CHESTED CAP MADE SHORT SHRIFT OF A WOULD-BE DOUBLE DRESSED IN HIS COSTUME...!"
"THAT TIME, THE SUPREME SERPENT HIMSELF TURNED OUT TO BE NONE OTHER THAN GENERAL CHEN... A FOREIGN ENEMY OUT TO SET AMERICAN AGAINST AMERICAN...!"
IF THERE WAS EVER AN UNDESIRABLE ALIEN, THIS CAT IS IT!
AND SO ENDS OUR LITTLE FLASHBACK FOR YOUR BENEFIT, VISION!
ANY QUESTIONS, AVENGER?
ONLY ONE, YELLOW JACKET...!
IF GENERAL CHEN HAS BEEN DEPORTED... THEN WHO IS THE NEW SUPREME SERPENT?
THAT'S ALMOST AS IMPORTANT, VISION, AS ANOTHER QUESTION...
"...NAMELY, WHERE WILL THE SERPENTS STRIKE NEXT??"
THERE'S THE GIRL WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
9

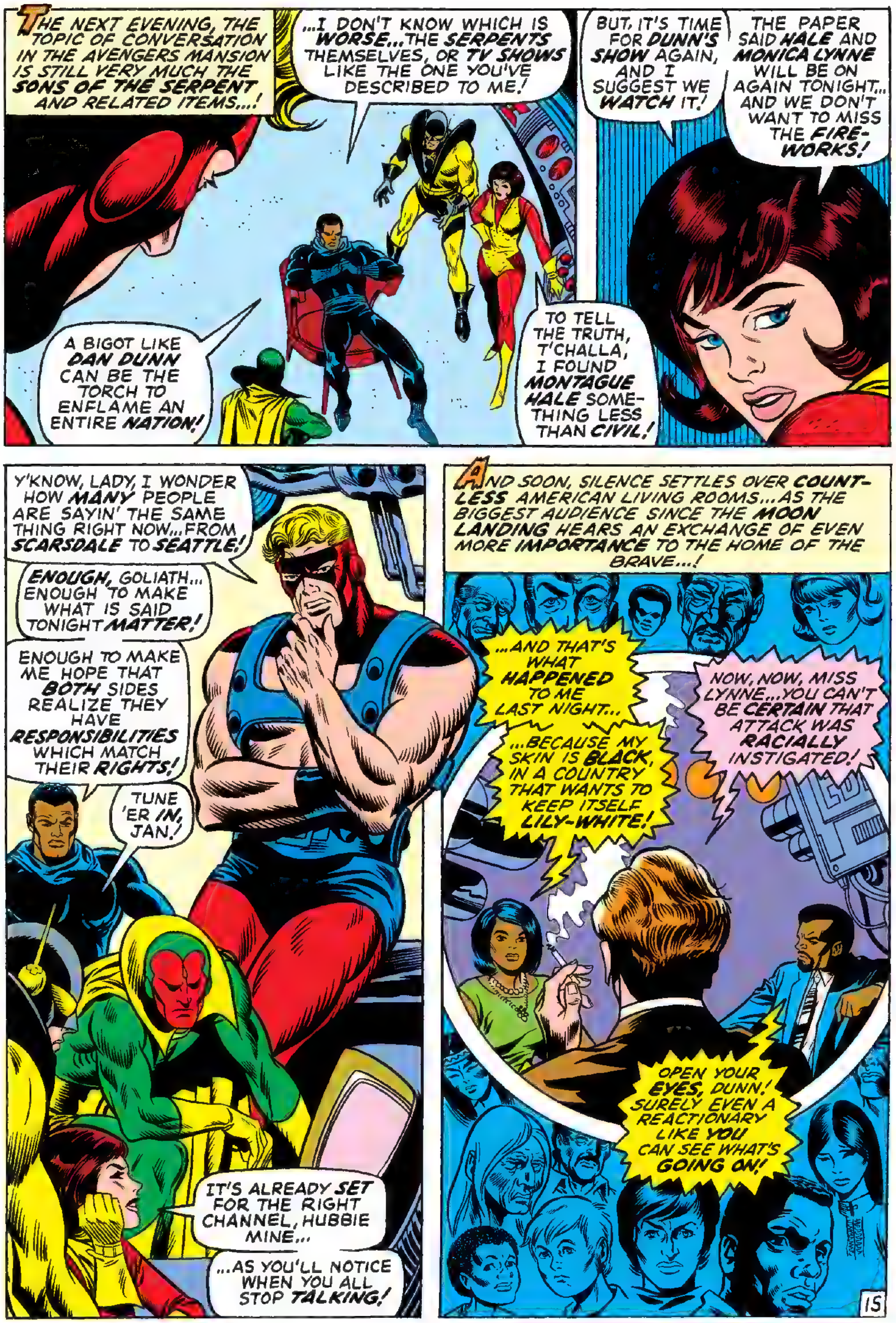
HOLD IT, SISTER... AND WE MAY LET YOU LIVE!
MAYBE!
ON SECOND THOUGHT, NOW THAT I GET A GOOD LOOK AT YA...
MAYBE THERE'S TOO MANY LIKE YOU AROUND ALREADY!
GET IT OVER WITH, LOUD-MOUTH!
BUT, IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THE THREE MASKED ASSAILANTS...AS, WITHOUT WARNING, LIGHTNING STRIKES-- JET-BLACK LIGHTNING!
GET DOWN, MISS!!
SPLAAKK!
10

LIKE A RAMPAGING JUNGLE JUGGERNAUT... LIKE THE SNARLING, SPITTING LEOPARD FOR WHICH HE IS NAMED... THE SON OF T'CHAKA ENTERS THE FRAY...!
EVEN IF I DID NOT RECOGNIZE YOU SERPENTS FROM OLD NEWS ACCOUNTS...
SPROW!
...THE BLACK PANTHER KNOWS WELL THE SCENT OF EVIL!!
YOU'LL TALK OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR MASK, AVENGER...
...WHEN I GET MY BLASTER BACK AGAIN!
NOW, JUST STAND STILL-- FOR ONE BRIEF SECOND--
--AND THAT'LL BE THE LAST SECOND YOU'LL EVER KNOW!
THE POLICE! MY GOD--
WHY DON'T THE POLICE COME?
11

THE POLICE CAN'T HELP YOU, LADY--AND NEITHER CAN THE PANTHER!
'CAUSE THAT CREEP'S GONNA FEEL THE SERPENTS' BITE-- RIGHT NOW!!
NO! NO!
AAAARRHH!
ZZRAAAKK
NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ME, MISS!
TO KILL A BEAST OF PREY, THEY MUST FIRST HIT HIM!
ONE OF THE MASKED HOODLUMS IS DOWN-- THE VICTIM OF HIS OWN COMRADES!
BRAPP!
NOW, I MUST REACH SHELTER... FORM A NEW PLAN OF ATTACK!
HOLD STILL, BLAST YOUR HIDE!
NOBODY COULD HIT A HUMAN JUMPING-JACK LIKE YOU!
THAT IS WHAT I AM COUNTING ON, ASSASSIN!
12

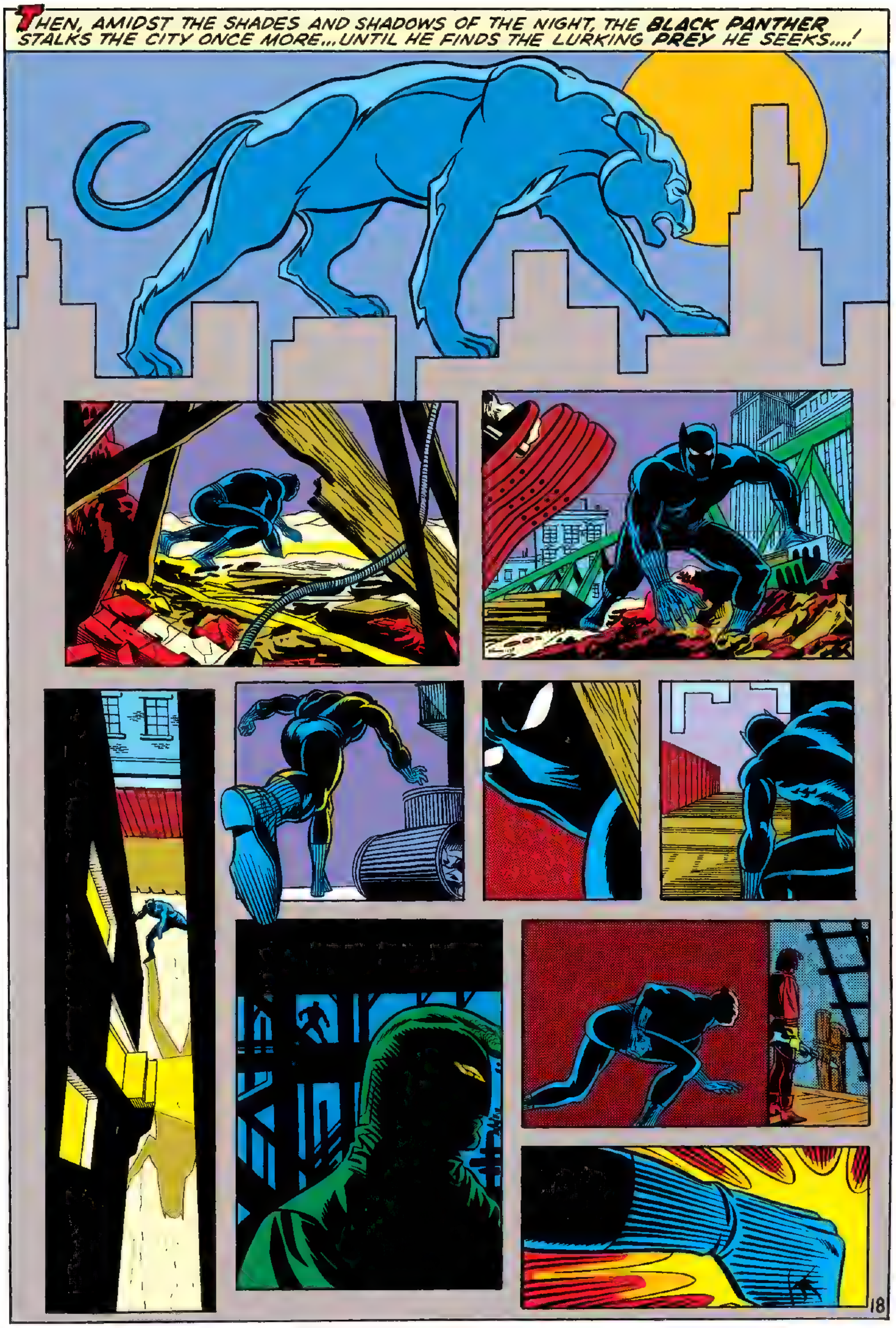

THERE! MY RETREAT HAS CONVINCED THE REMAINING TWO SERPENTS THAT I FEAR THEIR BLASTERS!
NOW, IF MY STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY SERVE ME ARIGHT...
THEY SHOULD FALL INTO MY HANDS...LIKE RIPE COCONUTS!
WE CAN'T GET AT HIM NOW, UNLESS WE TRACK HIM IN DARKNESS!
FORGET THAT LEAPFROG...AND DO WHAT WE CAME TO DO!
AND WE CAME FOR...THE GIRL!
YES... YOU CAME FOR THE GIRL...
--BUT I CAME FOR YOU!!
THE PANTHER! HE'S BACK--!
THOSE BRAINLESS, BLITHERING DOLTS!
DID THEY THINK THAT THE PANTHER WOULD STAY IN HIDING... QUAKING IN FEAR OF SUCH AS THEY?
STILL, WHAT THEY THOUGHT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE NOW!
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THEIR IMPENDING CAPTURE PUTS OUR PLANS IN JEOPARDY!
AND SO--I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO!
THE NEXT MOMENT, SEVERAL MILES AWAY...
THE TWO SERPENTS! THEY'VE BEEN-- DESTROYED--!
--BLASTED, SOMEHOW --BY SOME KIND OF REMOTE CONTROL!
FZAAPP!
13

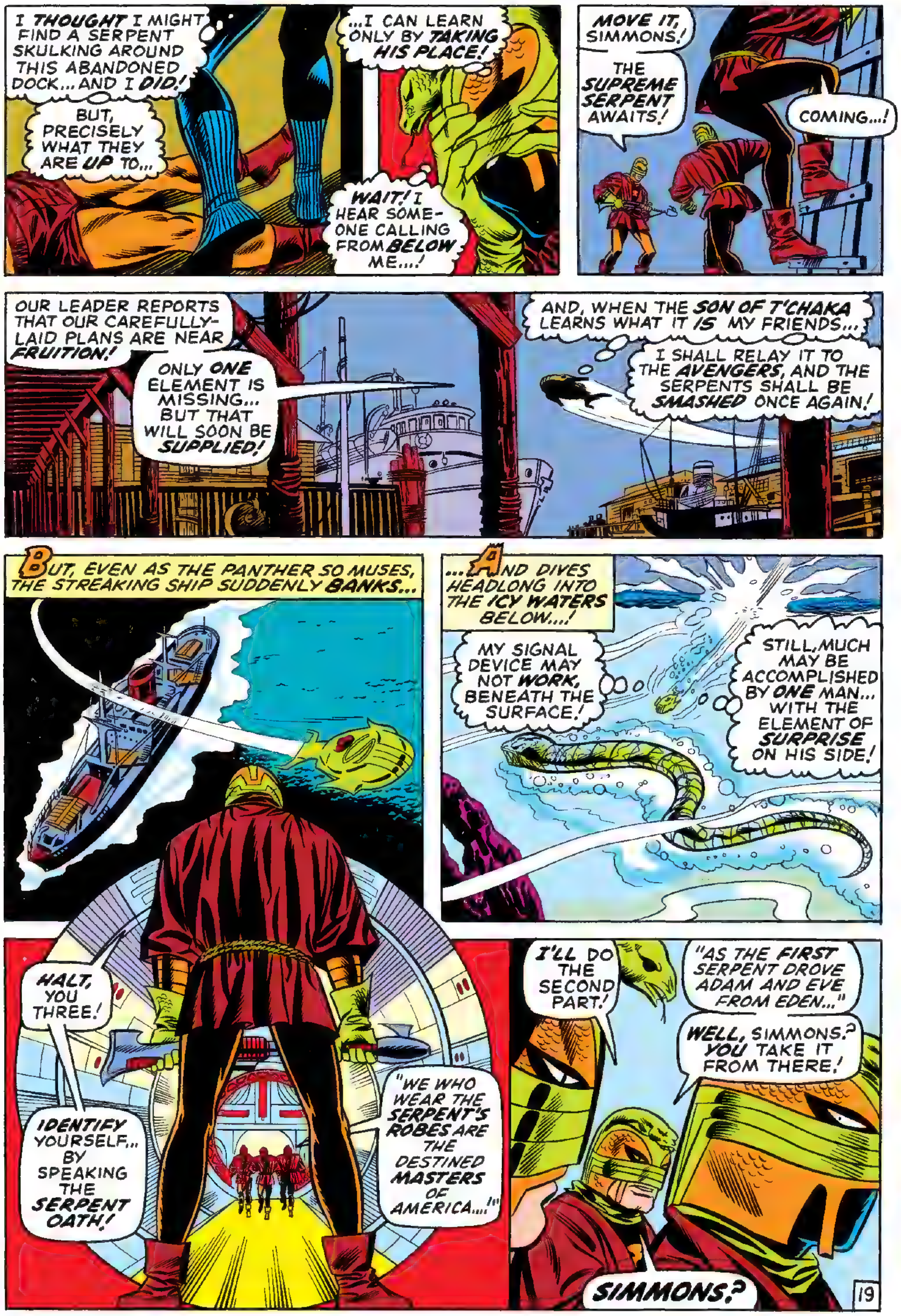

THEN, THE HARSH WAIL OF SIRENS... THE SCREECH OF ANGUISHED BRAKES... AND, ECHOING THRU THE NIGHT, A GIRL'S FRIGHTENED CRY...!
FOR GOD'S SAKE--HELP! OVER HERE...!!
TAKE IT EASY, LADY...NO NEED FOR HYSTERICS NOW!
WE CAME RUNNING AS SOON AS SOMEBODY REPORTED ALL THE SHOOTING!
NYPD
IT IS FORTUNATE THAT I WITNESSED THE ATTACK, AS I LANDED AT AVENGERS MANSION NEARBY!
BUT, WE'LL LEARN NOTHING FROM HER ASSAILANTS!
THEY ARE DEAD...TWO OF THEM AT THE HANDS OF THE ONE THEY SERVE!
STILL, PANTHER, MAYBE WE CAN FIGURE OUT THE REASON FOR THE ATTACK!
ANY IDEA OF WHY THE SERPENTS SHOULD SINGLE YOU OUT, MISS...?
THE NAME IS MONICA LYNNE!
AND MY SKIN IS REASON ENOUGH... FOR VERMIN LIKE THAT!
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHERE WERE THE POLICE UNTIL THE DANGER WAS OVER?
DIDN'T YOU WANT TO DIRTY YOUR HANDS...TO RESCUE A BLACK GIRL?
WE DO OUR BEST, LADY... BUT WE CAN'T BE EVERY-WHERE AT ONCE!
YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND...!
PERHAPS I DO UNDERSTAND... BETTER THAN YOU WANT ME TO!
EXCUSE ME, PLEASE! I HAVE TO CALL A MAN... ABOUT A CAUSE...!
14


THE NEXT EVENING, THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IN THE AVENGERS MANSION IS STILL VERY MUCH THE SONS OF THE SERPENT AND RELATED ITEMS...!
...I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE...THE SERPENTS THEMSELVES, OR TV SHOWS LIKE THE ONE YOU'VE DESCRIBED TO ME!
A BIGOT LIKE DAN DUNN CAN BE THE TORCH TO ENFLAME AN ENTIRE NATION!
TO TELL THE TRUTH, T'CHALLA, I FOUND MONTAGUE HALE SOMETHING LESS THAN CIVIL!
BUT, IT'S TIME FOR DUNN'S SHOW AGAIN, AND I SUGGEST WE WATCH IT!
THE PAPER SAID HALE AND MONICA LYNNE WILL BE ON AGAIN TONIGHT... AND WE DON'T WANT TO MISS THE FIREWORKS!
Y'KNOW, LADY, I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE SAYIN' THE SAME THING RIGHT NOW...FROM SCARSDALE TO SEATTLE!
ENOUGH, GOLIATH... ENOUGH TO MAKE WHAT IS SAID TONIGHT MATTER!
ENOUGH TO MAKE ME HOPE THAT BOTH SIDES REALIZE THEY HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH MATCH THEIR RIGHTS!
TUNE 'ER IN, JAN.!
IT'S ALREADY SET FOR THE RIGHT CHANNEL, HUBBIE MINE...
...AS YOU'LL NOTICE WHEN YOU ALL STOP TALKING!
AND SOON, SILENCE SETTLES OVER COUNTLESS AMERICAN LIVING ROOMS...AS THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE SINCE THE MOON LANDING HEARS AN EXCHANGE OF EVEN MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE HOME OF THE BRAVE...!
...AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME LAST NIGHT...
...BECAUSE MY SKIN IS BLACK, IN A COUNTRY THAT WANTS TO KEEP ITSELF LILY-WHITE!
NOW, NOW, MISS LYNNE...YOU CAN'T BE CERTAIN THAT ATTACK WAS RACIALLY INSTIGATED!
OPEN YOUR EYES, DUNN! SURELY EVEN A REACTIONARY LIKE YOU CAN SEE WHAT'S GOING ON!
15

I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, ALL RIGHT!
I KNOW THAT FANATICS LIKE YOU WANT TO SEE THE COUNTRY IN FLAMES FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH ENDS!
AND I KNOW THAT THE COUNTRY WILL DESERVE TO GO UP IN FLAMES...
...IF MORE PEOPLE DON'T SEE THE LIGHT LIKE MISS LYNNE... AND LET THE WORLD KNOW WHERE THEY STAND!
IT LOOKS AS IF MONICA LYNNE'S SAFETY IS BECOMING A CAUSE CELEBRE!
MAYBE YOU CAN BE COLD AND ANALYTICAL ABOUT IT, VISION...
BUT, ALL I SEE IS THAT THE SERPENTS ARE TRYING TO DO INDIRECTLY THIS TIME...
...WHAT THEY COULDN'T DO LAST TIME BY SHEER BRUTE FORCE!
IF THINGS AREN'T COOLED OFF...
...HALF OF AMERICA MAY SOON BE AT THE OTHER HALF'S THROAT!
MAYBE SO... BUT THE AVENGERS TIED THE SERPENTS' TAILS ONCE BEFORE...
AND I VOTE WE DO IT AGAIN!
NO!!
HUH? I'D THINK THAT YOU, MORE THAN ANY OF US...
THOSE ARE MY PEOPLE THAT THE SERPENTS HAVE BEEN BEATING... KILLING!
AND I CLAIM MY RIGHT TO TAKE THEM... ALONE!
16

THEN, WE SHALL STAND ASIDE...FOR THE MOMENT!
AGREED! YOU'VE GOT 24 HOURS ON YOUR OWN, PANTHER! AFTER THAT...
THANKS, AVENGERS!
I GET THE PICTURE!
BUT, CAN YOU GET THE SERPENTS, T'CHALLA...?
WHILE, AT THE TV STUDIO...
WANT TO DRIVE ME HOME AGAIN, MR. HALE?
IT'S TIME WE DISCUSSED A FEW THINGS!
MY PLEASURE, GIRL!
AND, I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE TO APPEAR AGAIN TOMORROW NIGHT, DUNN!
GLAD TO HEAR IT, HALE!
I WON'T REST TILL I'VE SHOWN YOU UP COAST TO COAST... FOR THE POWER-MAD MENACE YOU REALLY ARE!
SOON, NEAR CENTRAL PARK...
...NO LURKING SERPENTS TONIGHT, ANYWAY!
STILL, I CAN'T GET OVER THE FEELING I'M BEING WATCHED!
YOU ARE, MISS LYNNE...BY THE BLACK PANTHER!
YOU!
LISTEN CAREFULLY, PLEASE... I HAVEN'T MUCH TIME!
DON'T GO ON TV TOMORROW ...I'M ASKING YOU AS A SOUL BROTHER!
SOUL BR...? THEN YOU...
WHY HAVEN'T YOU LET ANYONE KNOW THIS BEFORE?
I THOUGHT IT WAS ENOUGH TO BE JUST A MAN!
BUT NOW, I KNOW IT'S TIME TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!
AND, THAT IS JUST WHAT THE BLACK PANTHER INTENDS TO DO!
BUT, I'LL DO IT MY WAY... NOT YOURS... NOT MONTAGUE HALE'S!
GOODBYE, MISS LYNNE...!
17


THEN, AMIDST THE SHADES AND SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT, THE BLACK PANTHER STALKS THE CITY ONCE MORE...UNTIL HE FINDS THE LURKING PREY HE SEEKS...!
18



I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND A SERPENT SKULKING AROUND THIS ABANDONED DOCK... AND I DID!
BUT, PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE UP TO...
...I CAN LEARN ONLY BY TAKING HIS PLACE!
WAIT! I HEAR SOME-ONE CALLING FROM BELOW ME...!
MOVE IT, SIMMONS!
THE SUPREME SERPENT AWAITS!
COMING...!
OUR LEADER REPORTS THAT OUR CAREFULLY-LAID PLANS ARE NEAR FRUITION!
ONLY ONE ELEMENT IS MISSING... BUT THAT WILL SOON BE SUPPLIED!
AND, WHEN THE SON OF T'CHAKA LEARNS WHAT IT IS MY FRIENDS...
I SHALL RELAY IT TO THE AVENGERS, AND THE SERPENTS SHALL BE SMASHED ONCE AGAIN!
BUT, EVEN AS THE PANTHER SO MUSES, THE STREAKING SHIP SUDDENLY BANKS...
...AND DIVES HEADLONG INTO THE ICY WATERS BELOW...!
MY SIGNAL DEVICE MAY NOT WORK, BENEATH THE SURFACE!
STILL, MUCH MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ONE MAN... WITH THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ON HIS SIDE!
HALT, YOU THREE!
IDENTIFY YOURSELF... BY SPEAKING THE SERPENT OATH!
"WE WHO WEAR THE SERPENT'S ROBES ARE THE DESTINED MASTERS OF AMERICA...!"
I'LL DO THE SECOND PART!
"AS THE FIRST SERPENT DROVE ADAM AND EVE FROM EDEN..."
WELL, SIMMONS? YOU TAKE IT FROM THERE!
SIMMONS?
19

CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE, SIMMONS?
I KNEW IT! YOU'RE NOT SIMMONS!
ATTENTION, MY FELLOW SERPENTS...!
THIS IS THE SUPREME SERPENT SPEAKING!
I TOLD YOU THAT ONLY ONE ELEMENT WAS NEEDED TO COMPLETE OUR PREPARATIONS FOR A POWER TAKE-OVER!
AND NOW, THAT FINAL ELEMENT HAS UNWITTINGLY WALKED INTO OUR VERY HANDS!
GENTLEMEN, MAY I PRESENT... THE BLACK PANTHER!!
NEXT: POWER PLAY!
20

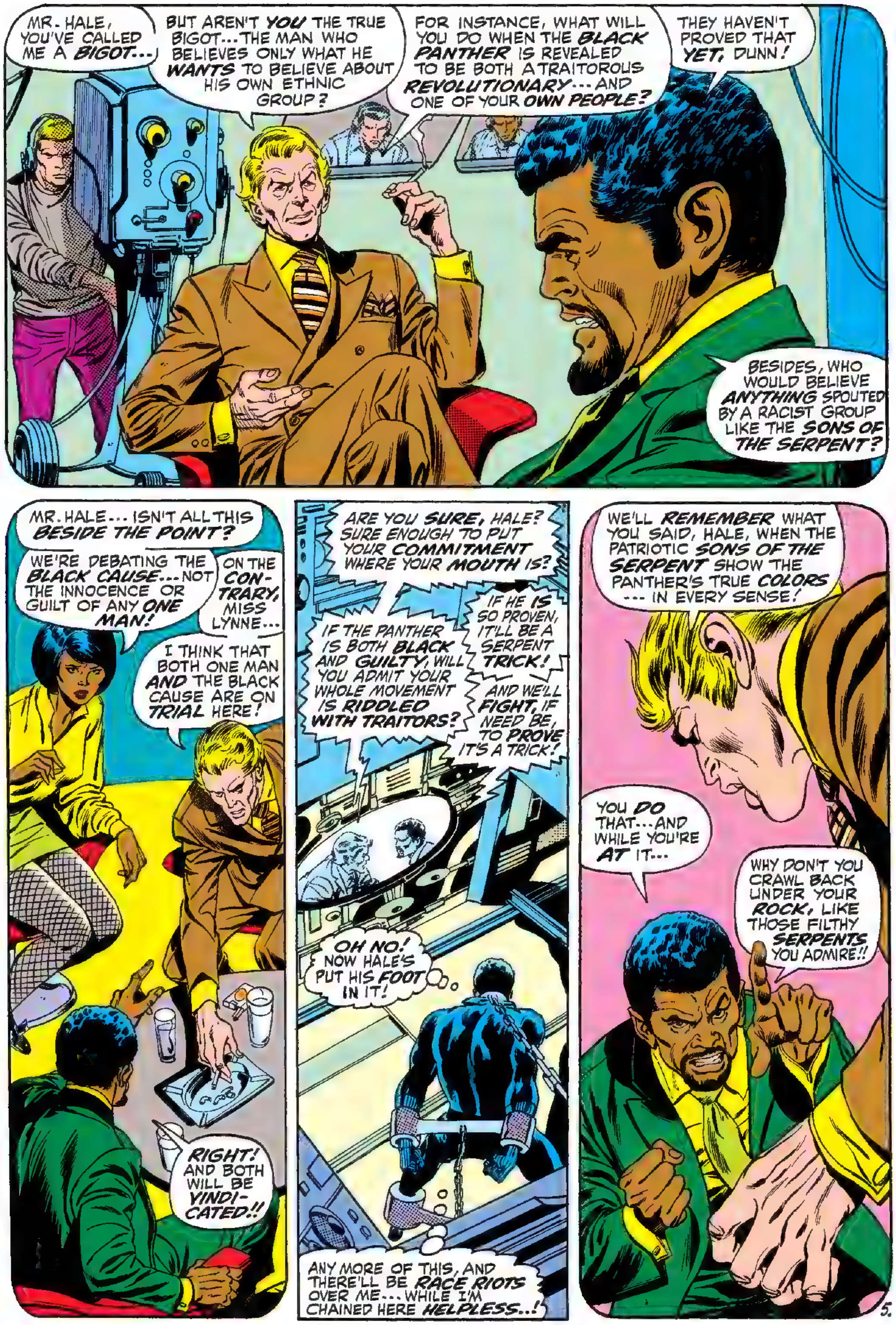
AVENGERS
15¢
74
MAR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE AVENGERS
NOBODY STOPS THE PANTHER--- NOBODY!
HELP! POLICE! POLICE!!
NO--- NEVER MIND! IT'S ...TOO LATE!!
DEATH IS THE HUNTER!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
A CITY WRITHES IN TURMOIL... A NATION FALTERS ON THE BRINK OF CRISIS! AND, IN THE SOMBRE DARKNESS OF AVENGERS MANSION, FOUR GRIM FIGURES GATHER ANXIOUSLY ABOUT THE FLICKERING LIGHT OF A TV MONITOR... TO HEAR THE MOST UNEXPECTED, THE MOST SENSES-SHOCKING DEMAND OF ALL:
"PURSUE THE PANTHER!"
SAY IT AIN'T SO!
SAY I DIDN'T HEAR THAT COLOR-TUBE JOCKEY RIGHT!
BUT YOU DID HEAR HIM, CLINT... WE ALL DID!
HE'S SAYING THE BLACK PANTHER HAS TURNED CRIMINAL...
...AND THAT IT'S UP TO THE AVENGERS TO CAPTURE HIM...
...OR ELSE BE CONSIDERED IN LEAGUE WITH HIM!!
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • JOHN BUSCEMA ARTIST
TOM PALMER... INKER
SAM ROSEN...LETTERER

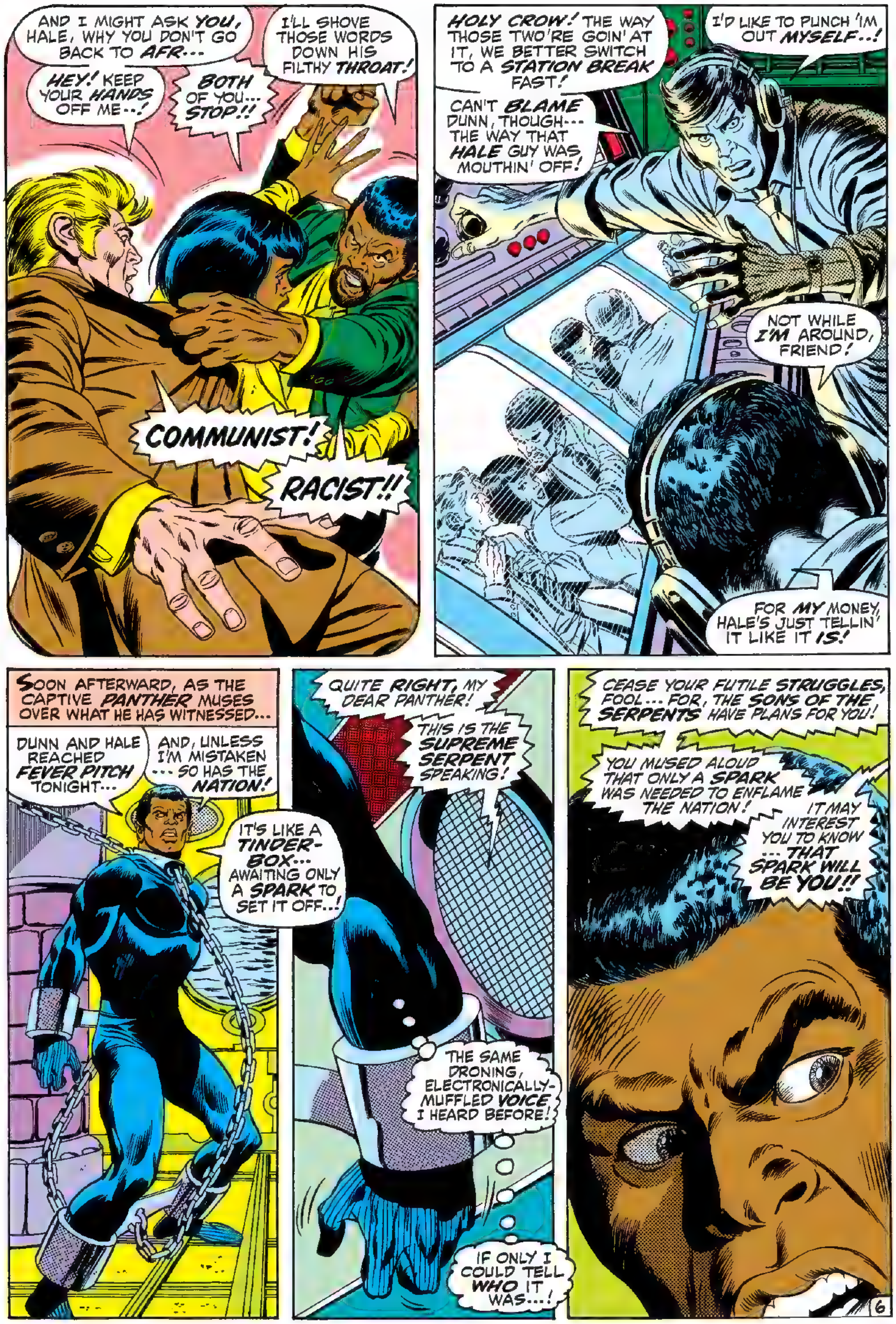
SO FAR, THE PANTHER HAS VICTIMIZED ONLY BUSINESSES OWNED BY KNOWN SUPPORTERS OF THE ULTRA-RIGHTIST SONS OF THE SERPENT...
...THUS LEADING ANEW TO SPECULATION THAT HE IS BOTH BLACK... AND THE VANGUARD OF A NEW TYPE OF MARAUDING MILITANT!
AND LEADIN' GOLIATH TO WONDER WHERE THAT JOKER GOT HIS FACTS... OFF A WHEATIES BOX?
T'CHALLA ONLY HID THE FACT THAT HE WAS BLACK BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE JUDGED AS A MAN... NOT A RACIAL TYPE!
IF THAT NEWSHOUND DOESN'T KNOW THAT THE PANTHER'S BEIN' FRAMED...!
EASY, BIG MAN! HE'S REPORTING THE NEWS... NOT MAKING IT!
THOUGH THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THERE'S NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE!
LOOK! THERE'S MORE..!
"THESE FILMS, TAKEN ONLY MINUTES AGO, SHOW THE LATEST POLICE ATTEMPT TO APPREHEND THE PANTHER..."
"...AN ATTEMPT WHICH, LIKE ALL PREVIOUS ONES, ENDED IN TOTAL FAILURE...!"
NUTS! I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!
I'M TUNIN' THAT BOZO OUT... BEFORE I GET MAD ENOUGH TO KICK IN THE SCREEN...!
HOLD IT, GOLIATH!
NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL IT IS... WE'VE GOT TO SEE THIS THRU TO THE END!
2.

MEANWHILE, SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE ALLEGED THAT THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES ARE HIDING THE FUGITIVE, IN THEIR FIFTH AVENUE MANSION!
THIS REPORTER, CARL RYDER, DEFINITELY DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THAT THEORY...
...BUT DEMANDS THAT THE AVENGERS PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE, BY CAPTURING THEIR RENEGADE MEMBER!
AND NOW, HERE IS A VIDEO TAPE JUST RECEIVED BY THIS NETWORK---
...SENT TO US BY THE MYSTERIOUS MASKED FIGURE KNOWN AS THE SUPREME SERPENT!
ITS CONTENTS HAVE NOT BEEN VIEWED IN ADVANCE...
BUT, IT IS THOUGHT THAT IT MAY DEAL WITH THE SUBJECT OF THE BLACK PANTHER..!
OH, GREAT! INSTEAD OF LOCKIN' THOSE LOONIES UP, NOW THEY'RE GIVIN' 'EM AIR TIME!
YOU CAN'T ARREST THEM IF YOU CAN'T FIND THEM, PARTNER!
THEY KEEP THEIR HQ A SECRET, REMEMBER?
MARK HIM CLOSELY, MY FRIENDS! THIS IS THE MAN WHO SPOUTS THE VENOM THAT MAY POISON A NATION!
...THE SO-CALLED PANTHER IS NO MERE THIEF...BUT A TRAITOR TO ALL THAT AMERICANS HOLD DEAR!
THE AVENGERS SEEK TO PROTECT HIM... BUT SOON, AMERICA WILL KNOW WHO HER TRUE FRIENDS ARE...
...IN A FEW SHORT HOURS, WHEN THE SONS OF THE SERPENT UNMASK THE PANTHER... ON NATIONAL TELEVISION!
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN... THEY'VE CAPTURED T'CHALLA!!
3.

WHILE, IN A SEALED COMPARTMENT, ABOARD THE SERPENTS' HARBOR-STALKING VESSEL, ANOTHER PAIR OF EYES WATCHES THE SELFSAME BROADCAST--- WITH AN EVEN MORE UN-FAVORABLE REACTION--!
THEN THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN LEFT ALIVE ALL THIS TIME!*
* THE BLACK PANTHER WAS CAPTURED IN THE FINAL PANEL OF LAST ISSUE'S EPIC!. STAN
THE SERPENTS WANT TO CAUSE A CIVIL WAR--- TO SET BLACK AGAINST WHITE!
AND WHAT BETTER WAY THAN TO REVEAL THAT THE PANTHER ---HE WHO IS ALSO AN AVENGER--- IS BOTH BLACK AND A MARAUDER?
THAT WILL BE THE CLIMAX--- THE CAPSTONE TO A WEEK OF EVENTS WHICH THREATEN TO SET THE NATION AFIRE!
BUT, IT WON'T WORK--- DO YOU HEAR ME--?
I SHALL BE FREE!
BUT, THE AFRICAN AVENGER'S SOLE ANSWER IS THE MOCKING RATTLE OF HIS OWN CHAINS---AND THEN, AS ANOTHER CARE-FULLY-SELECTED PROGRAM BEGINS A FEW MINUTES LATER---
---GOOD EVENING! THIS IS DAN DUNN, THE HOST THAT THE TRUE ENEMIES OF AMERICA LOVE TO HATE!
MY GUESTS THIS EVENING, AS ON THE PAST TWO EVENINGS, ARE MISS MONICA LYNNE---
---AND MR. MONTAGUE HALE, SPOKESMAN OF BLACK AMERICA --- AND OTHER LOST CAUSES!
4.

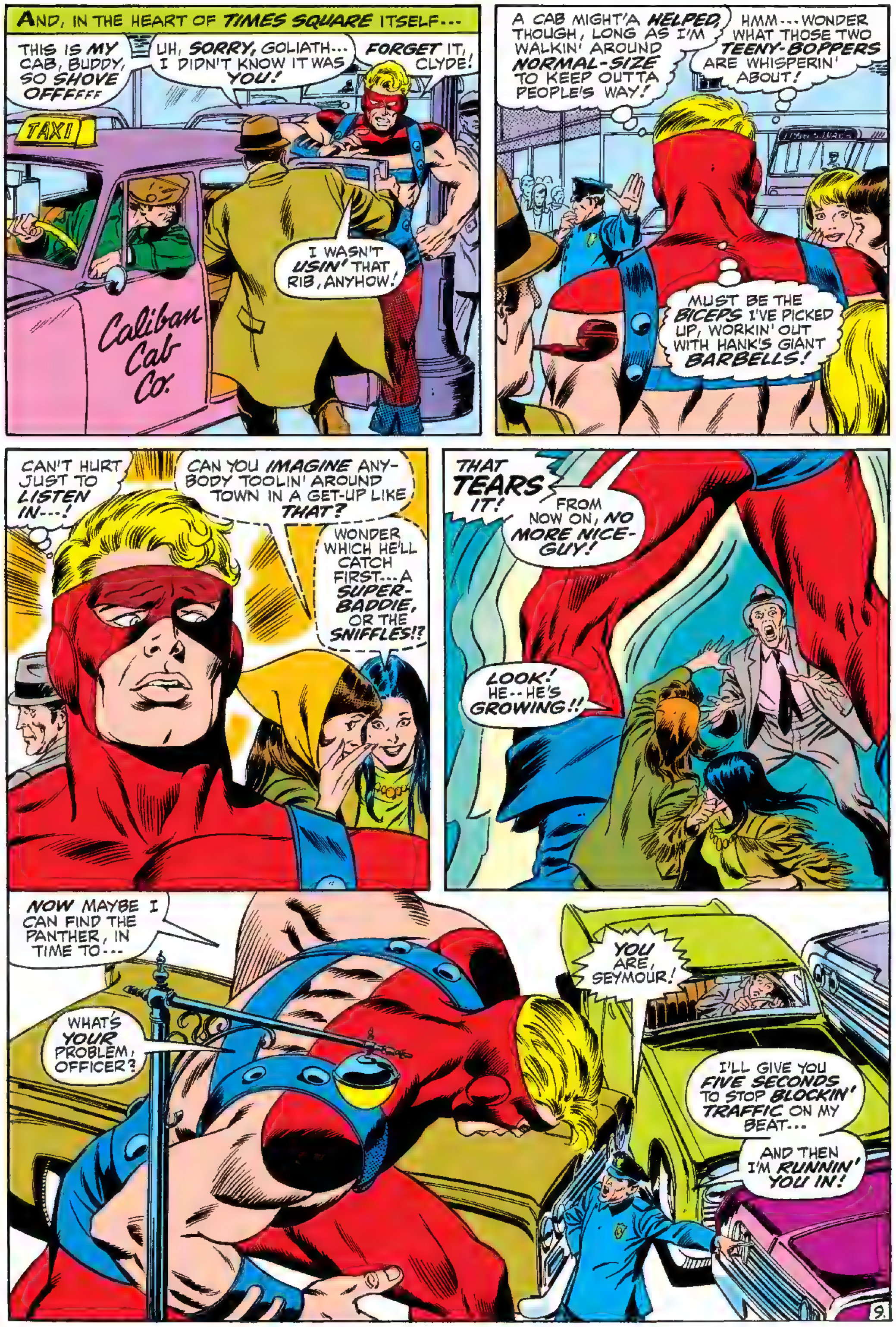


MR. HALE, YOU'VE CALLED ME A BIGOT...
BUT AREN'T YOU THE TRUE BIGOT...THE MAN WHO BELIEVES ONLY WHAT HE WANTS TO BELIEVE ABOUT HIS OWN ETHNIC GROUP?
FOR INSTANCE, WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE BLACK PANTHER IS REVEALED TO BE BOTH A TRAITOROUS REVOLUTIONARY... AND ONE OF YOUR OWN PEOPLE?
THEY HAVEN'T PROVED THAT YET, DUNN!
BESIDES, WHO WOULD BELIEVE ANYTHING SPOUTED BY A RACIST GROUP LIKE THE SONS OF THE SERPENT?
MR. HALE... ISN'T ALL THIS BESIDE THE POINT?
WE'RE DEBATING THE BLACK CAUSE... NOT THE INNOCENCE OR GUILT OF ANY ONE MAN!
ON THE CON-TRARY, MISS LYNNE...
I THINK THAT BOTH ONE MAN AND THE BLACK CAUSE ARE ON TRIAL HERE!
RIGHT! AND BOTH WILL BE VINDI-CATED!!
ARE YOU SURE, HALE? SURE ENOUGH TO PUT YOUR COMMITMENT WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS?
IF THE PANTHER IS BOTH BLACK AND GUILTY, WILL YOU ADMIT YOUR WHOLE MOVEMENT IS RIDDLED WITH TRAITORS?
IF HE IS SO PROVEN, IT'LL BE A SERPENT TRICK!
AND WE'LL FIGHT, IF NEED BE, TO PROVE IT'S A TRICK!
OH NO! NOW HALE'S PUT HIS FOOT IN IT!
ANY MORE OF THIS, AND THERE'LL BE RACE RIOTS OVER ME... WHILE I'M CHAINED HERE HELPLESS..!
WE'LL REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID, HALE, WHEN THE PATRIOTIC SONS OF THE SERPENT SHOW THE PANTHER'S TRUE COLORS --- IN EVERY SENSE!
YOU DO THAT... AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...
WHY DON'T YOU CRAWL BACK UNDER YOUR ROCK, LIKE THOSE FILTHY SERPENTS YOU ADMIRE!!
5.


AND I MIGHT ASK YOU, HALE, WHY YOU DON'T GO BACK TO AFR---
I'LL SHOVE THOSE WORDS DOWN HIS FILTHY THROAT!
HEY! KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME--!
BOTH OF YOU... STOP!!
COMMUNIST!
RACIST!!
HOLY CROW! THE WAY THOSE TWO'RE GOIN' AT IT, WE BETTER SWITCH TO A STATION BREAK FAST!
I'D LIKE TO PUNCH 'IM OUT MYSELF--!
CAN'T BLAME DUNN, THOUGH--- THE WAY THAT HALE GUY WAS MOUTHIN' OFF!
NOT WHILE I'M AROUND, FRIEND!
FOR MY MONEY, HALE'S JUST TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS!
SOON AFTERWARD, AS THE CAPTIVE PANTHER MUSES OVER WHAT HE HAS WITNESSED...
DUNN AND HALE REACHED FEVER PITCH TONIGHT---
AND, UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN --- SO HAS THE NATION!
IT'S LIKE A TINDER-BOX--- AWAITING ONLY A SPARK TO SET IT OFF--!
QUITE RIGHT, MY DEAR PANTHER!
THIS IS THE SUPREME SERPENT SPEAKING!
THE SAME DRONING, ELECTRONICALLY-MUFFLED VOICE I HEARD BEFORE!
IF ONLY I COULD TELL WHO IT WAS...!
CEASE YOUR FUTILE STRUGGLES, FOOL... FOR, THE SONS OF THE SERPENTS HAVE PLANS FOR YOU!
YOU MUSED ALOUD THAT ONLY A SPARK WAS NEEDED TO ENFLAME THE NATION!
IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW ... THAT SPARK WILL BE YOU!!
6

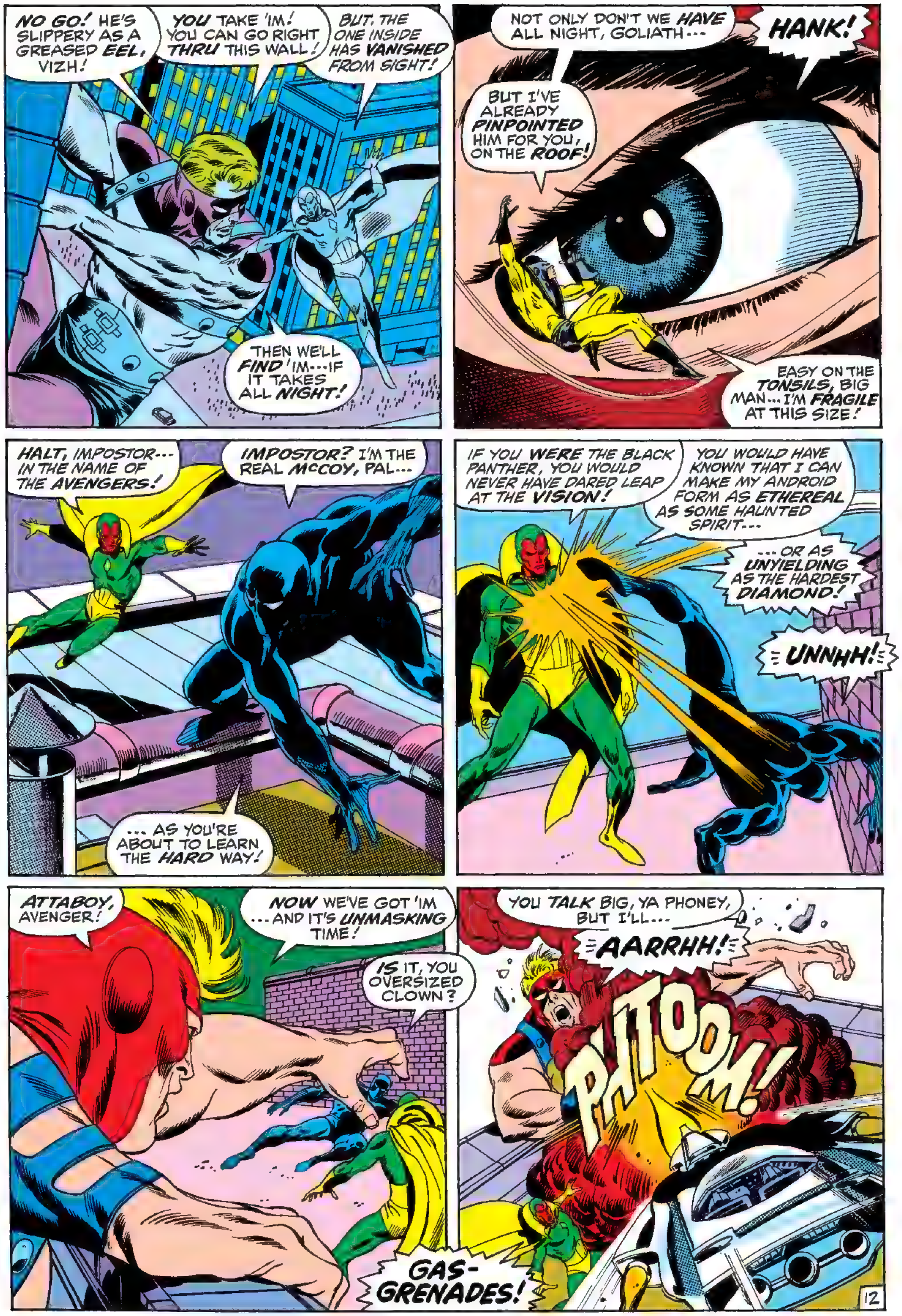
WHILE, A FEW SHORT MILES AWAY, A DRAMATIC DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED---!
WHATEVER OUR OWN FEELINGS, WE MUST CAPTURE T'CHALLA!
OR THE CRUMB WHO'S GIVIN' HIM A BUM RAP!
WE'LL COVER MORE GROUND IF WE SEPARATE!
BUT REMEMBER, CLINT--- THIS IS A TEAM EFFORT, NOT A PERSONAL VENDETTA!
IF YOU SPOT HIM, CONTACT THE REST OF US!
SURE THING, AVENGER!
THAT WAY, YOU THREE CAN HAVE WHAT'S LEFT OF 'IM!
BUT SOON, AS THE LONE VISION STALKS HIS SECTOR OF THE NIGHT-DARKENED SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK---
THAT'S ONE OF THE AVENGERS ...THE ANDROID ONE!
I HEAR HIS VOICE IS ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU THE CREEPS!
HE AIN'T WHITE... AND HE SURE AIN'T BLACK!
CAB Co
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, BABY?
GOOD HEAVENS! MARTHA... LOOK!
HE'S WALKIN' DOWN... RIGHT INTO THE CEMENT!
STOP 'IM, MAN!
STOP HIM YOURSELF!
HE LOOKS SO GRIM... I WOULDN'T TACKLE HIM FOR A MILLION BUCKS!
7.

NOW HE--- HE'S ALMOST GONE!
AND HE STILL HASN'T EVEN SPOKEN TO US!
WHY DIDN'T HE SAY ANYTHING? WHY??
UNLIKE MOST HUMANS, I PREFER NOT TO SPEAK UNLESS I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY!
AND NOW, THOUGH I LABOR IN PART TO SAVE THOSE WHO DWELL ABOVE---
I PREFER NOT TO WALK AMONG THEM!
AS, ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY---
WOW-EEE!
IT'S ONE OF THE AVENGERS!!
A BIT LATE FOR YOU KIDS TO BE UP, ISN'T IT?
JEWELRY
IT WAS A BIRTHDAY MOVIE-PARTY, MR. YELLOWJACKET!
SIGN MY AUTOGRAPH BOOK FIRST, WILL YOU, YELLOWJACKET?
NO--- MINE!
NO, MINE! FOR TWO OF YOURS, I CAN GET ONE OF CAPTAIN AMERICA!
UH, I HATE TO DISAPPOINT ANY OF YOU, KIDS---
SO, I'LL DO JUST ONE STUNT THAT'LL BE FOR ALL OF YOU---
---BY SHRINKING DOWN TO THE SIZE OF A REAL YELLOWJACKET!
HOLY TOLEDO!
HE'S ALMOST AS SMALL AS RAQUEL WELCH GOT IN "FANTASTIC VOYAGE"!!
POPP!
BUT NOW---WHERE'D HE GO?
AW, NONE A THESE SUPERHEROES REALLY CARE ANYTHING ABOUT ORDINARY PEOPLE!
I'M JUST GLAD YOU DON'T KNOW THE TRUTH, SON--!
---THAT, IF WE DON'T FIND THE PANTHER, THERE MIGHT BE NO MORE PARTIES---FOR A LONG TIME!
8


AND, IN THE HEART OF TIMES SQUARE ITSELF...
THIS IS MY CAB, BUDDY, SO SHOVE OFFFFFF
UH, SORRY, GOLIATH... I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS YOU!
FORGET IT, CLYDE!
TAXI
I WASN'T USIN' THAT RIB, ANYHOW!
Caliban Cab Co.
A CAB MIGHT'A HELPED, THOUGH, LONG AS I'M WALKIN' AROUND NORMAL-SIZE TO KEEP OUTTA PEOPLE'S WAY!
HMM... WONDER WHAT THOSE TWO TEENY-BOPPERS ARE WHISPERIN' ABOUT!
MUST BE THE BICEPS I'VE PICKED UP, WORKIN' OUT WITH HANK'S GIANT BARBELLS!
CAN'T HURT JUST TO LISTEN IN...!
CAN YOU IMAGINE ANYBODY TOOLIN' AROUND TOWN IN A GET-UP LIKE THAT?
WONDER WHICH HE'LL CATCH FIRST... A SUPER-BADDIE, OR THE SNIFFLES!?
THAT TEARS IT!
FROM NOW ON, NO MORE NICE-GUY!
LOOK! HE--HE'S GROWING!!
NOW MAYBE I CAN FIND THE PANTHER, IN TIME TO...
YOU ARE, SEYMOUR!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, OFFICER?
I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE SECONDS TO STOP BLOCKIN' TRAFFIC ON MY BEAT...
AND THEN I'M RUNNIN' YOU IN!
9.

MEANWHILE, IN STILL ANOTHER DIRECTION...
A LOT OF GOOD I'M DOING THE AVENGERS... ME, THE POOR MAN'S TINKER BELL!
EVEN FROM UP HERE, I CAN'T SEE HIDE NOR HAIR OF...
WAIT! THRU THAT WINDOW..!
IT IS! IT'S THE PANTHER!!
OR AT LEAST, SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE HIM--- SHAKING DOWN A POTENTIAL VICTIM!
I'D BETTER SIGNAL THE OTHERS!
WASP TO AVENGERS... WASP TO AVENGERS!
OUR MAN'S PULLING A JOB AT 23RD AND LEXINGTON, AND IT LOOKS LIKE A REALIE!
I'LL STALL HIM AS LONG AS I CAN, GUYS!
BUT DON'T TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE HERE, HUH?
...Y'KNOW, WHITEY, YOU OUGHT TO THANK ME FOR TAKIN' THESE THINGS OFF YOUR HANDS!
IT'S DANGEROUS TO BE A JEWELRY SALESMAN, ALL ALONE IN THE BIG BAD...
WHO'S THAT??
IF YOU'D DONE YOUR HOMEWORK, MY WOULD-BE AVENGER...
...YOU'D KNOW A WOMAN-SIZED WASP WHEN YOU SAW ONE!
SURE I KNOW YOU! YOU JUST SURPRISED ME, THAT'S ALL!
BUT, IF YOU'RE HERE TO HELP MR. CHARLIE THERE GET BACK HIS MARBLES...
10

THEN, LADY, YOU'RE DEFINITELY IN THE WRONG PEW!
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY THE PANTHER'S DICTION!
BUT, WHOEVER YOU ARE... YOU'RE FAST!
STILL, IF YOU WERE THE REAL BLACK PANTHER...
...THAT WOULD'VE BEEN ALL FOR LITTLE WASPIE!
THWUK!
TAKE YOUR CHUCKLES WHILE YOU CAN GET 'EM, WOMAN...
'CAUSE, IN JUST A MINUTE, THERE'LL ONLY BE ONE OF US ALIVE IN THIS ROOM!
...GOTTA KEEP CLIMBIN'...!
JAN'S SIGNAL'S COMIN' FROM ONE OF THESE FLOORS!
BUT WHICH ONE? WHICH ONE??
WADDAYA KNOW... I STRUCK PAY DIRT!
GOLIATH!
WHO GAVE YA THE FIRST CLUE, NANCY DREW?
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED PULLING THIS REAL JOB!
THE SERPENTS'LL HAVE MY HIDE FOR RISKIN' MYSELF AFTER THEY TOLD ME NOT TO!
...IF THE AVENGERS DON'T GET ME FIRST!
HEY... COME BACK HERE, PLAY-MATE!
THE PARTY'S JUST STARTIN' TO SWING!
11.



NO GO! HE'S SLIPPERY AS A GREASED EEL, VIZH!
YOU TAKE 'IM! YOU CAN GO RIGHT THRU THIS WALL!
BUT THE ONE INSIDE HAS VANISHED FROM SIGHT!
THEN WE'LL FIND 'IM--- IF IT TAKES ALL NIGHT!
NOT ONLY DON'T WE HAVE ALL NIGHT, GOLIATH---
HANK!
BUT I'VE ALREADY PINPOINTED HIM FOR YOU, ON THE ROOF!
EASY ON THE TONSILS, BIG MAN... I'M FRAGILE AT THIS SIZE!
HALT, IMPOSTOR--- IN THE NAME OF THE AVENGERS!
IMPOSTOR? I'M THE REAL McCOY, PAL---
--- AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN THE HARD WAY!
IF YOU WERE THE BLACK PANTHER, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE DARED LEAP AT THE VISION!
YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT I CAN MAKE MY ANDROID FORM AS ETHEREAL AS SOME HAUNTED SPIRIT---
--- OR AS UNYIELDING AS THE HARDEST DIAMOND!
UNNHH!
ATTABOY, AVENGER!
NOW WE'VE GOT 'IM --- AND IT'S UNMASKING TIME!
IS IT, YOU OVERSIZED CLOWN?
GAS-GRENADES!
YOU TALK BIG, YA PHONEY, BUT I'LL---
AARRHH!
PHTOOM!
12

AND, WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS...
PULL ME UP!! I--- CAN'T SEE... LOSIN' MY GRIP...!
I CAN'T PULL YOU UP, AVENGER.. WITHOUT BECOMING TOO HEAVY FOR THE ROOF TO SUPPORT!
IF YOU COULD ONLY SHRINK IN SIZE... BECOME YOUR NORMAL WEIGHT..!
HE CAN'T, VISION--- THAT GAS-GRENADE MADE HIM TOO GROGGY TO CONCENTRATE!
BUT... WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING... FAST!
IF GOLIATH FALLS FROM THIS HEIGHT---HE'S HAD IT!!
THERE IS ONE CHANCE... AND ONE CHANCE ONLY!
IF I CAN SWOOP TO THE STREET BELOW ---DISPERSE THE GAPING CROWDS THERE---!
HOLY CATS! THE BIG GUY'S GONNA FALL..!
I CAN SAVE HIM---IF ALL OF YOU WILL STAND BACK AT ONCE!
AND YOU SHALL STAND BACK---IF I MUST USE FORCE!
GANGWAY, PEOPLE! THAT JOE MEANS IT!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, AVENGERS---THE BLACK PANTHER ISN'T STICKING AROUND TO SEE IT!
AND THAT MEANS...THE SONS OF THE SERPENT WIN!
NO TIME TO WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW!
GOLIATH IS FALLING!
KKRRUKKKK
13

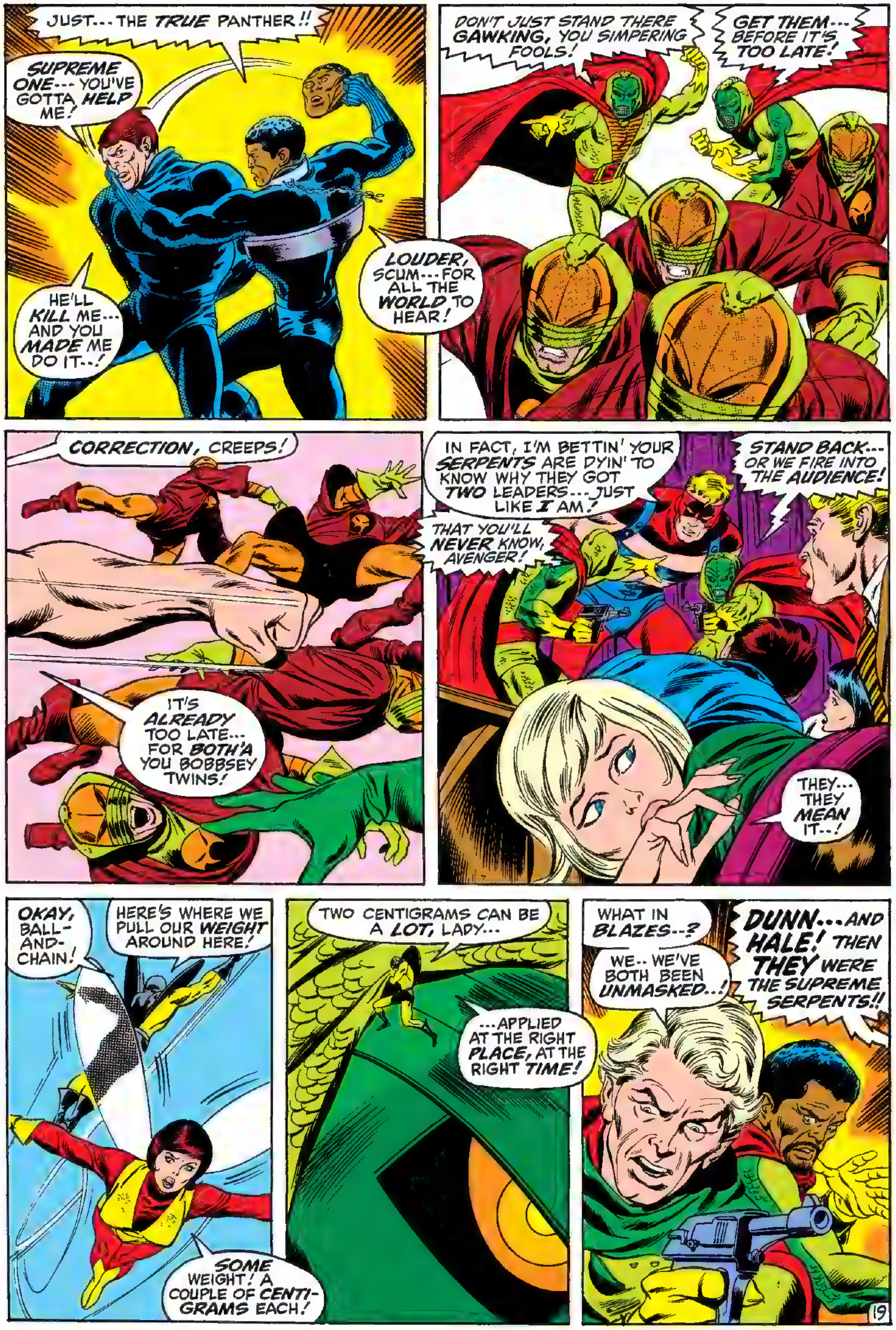
WITH THE IMPACT OF A PLUMMETING PILEDRIVER, CLINT BARTON'S MAMMOTH FORM STRIKES THE SHATTERING PAVEMENT---!
SKRAKK!
THEN, LONG MOMENTS LATER---
I MULTIPLIED MY MASS AT THE FINAL INSTANT!
BUT, DID I SLOW HIS GREAT FRAME ENOUGH---TO SAVE HIS LIFE?
OR DID THAT LIFE PASS FROM HIM, AS EASILY AS I NOW DRIFT THRU HIS UNMOVING LIMBS?
WAIT! HE MOVES... HE SPEAKS!
PAT ME---ON THE BACK--- AND I SAY "MAMA"!..
STOW YOUR WORRIES, VISION!
THE BIG FELLA'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT!
...SORRY, CREW! IF I HADN'T PLAYED CLUMSY CARP, YOU'D HAVE NABBED THAT PHONY!
YOU DID AS MUCH AS ANY AVENGER COULD, CLINT!
STILL, WE'RE NOWHERE---AND TIME'S GROWING SHORT---!
HOLD, AVENGERS! THE WARNING LIGHT FLASHES...
...SIGNALLING THE APPROACH OF OUR BUTLER JARVIS...
---AND, IT WOULD SEEM, A RATHER UNEXPECTED GUEST!
I'M SORRY, SIR---BUT THE LADY WAS MOST INSISTENT!
SHE SAID IT CONCERNED MASTER T'CHALLA---!
AVENGERS, I---MY NAME IS MONICA LYNNE!
I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU---ABOUT THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE BLACK PANTHER!
YOU MAY GO, JARVIS! IT APPEARS WE HAVE A TV CELEBRITY IN OUR MIDST!
14

YOU'LL ALL ACT LESS SMUG WHEN YOU TURN ON THAT SET!
THE SERPENTS ARE CUTTING IN ON NATIONWIDE TV RIGHT NOW... WITH THE PANTHER THEIR CAPTIVE!
WHY YOUR SUDDEN CONCERN FOR HIS WELL-BEING, MISS LYNNE?
BECAUSE I'VE MET THE PANTHER ... TALKED WITH HIM...
AND WHILE YOU SIT HERE DOING NOTHING, I'M SURE HE'S BEING RAILROADED---FRAMED!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, MISS, WE'RE SURE OF THE SAME THING!
BUT, WE'RE HARDLY DOING NOTHING ABOUT IT...!
KLIK
...THUS, IN ONLY A FEW SHORT MOMENTS...
WE SHALL UNMASK BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES THIS CRIMINAL --- THIS ANARCHIST IN SUPERHERO'S CLOTHING...
AND WHEN WE DO, AMERICA WILL KNOW AT LAST ITS REAL ENEMIES --- AND WHAT MUST BE DONE ABOUT THEM!
TRANSLATION: A COAST-TO-COAST BLOOD BATH AND RACE WAR!
IF ONLY HE'LL RANT AND RAVE FOR A FEW MINUTES LONGER---
HE WILL, LOVER--- HE'S THE TYPE!
NOR IS JANET PYM MISTAKEN--- AS MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE BOMBARDED BY WORDS WHICH A FEW OF THEM LIKE--- AND MOST OF THEM FEAR--- BUT NONE CAN IGNORE---!
BUT THEN... EVEN AS THE SERPENT'S HARANGUE REACHES A RABID CRESCENDO---
THERE'S THE RATS--- SO WE MUST BE IN THE RIGHT HOLE!
THEY'VE LOCATED US... EVEN HERE IN THIS ABANDONED STUDIO!
THE AVENGERS!
KILL THEM... BEFORE THEY RUIN EVERY-THING!
15

FOOL! THE LEADER SAID NO GUNFIRE... IT MIGHT UPSET THE AUDIENCE WE GATHERED!
THEN CHARGE THEM! WE OUTNUMBER THEM FIVE TO FOUR!
I GOT NEWS FOR YOU, SNAKE-EYES...
YOU FIVE DON'T EVEN OUTNUMBER ME!!
AIEEEE!
YOU-- YOU CAN'T CRUSH US---!
THAT WOULD BE... MURDER!
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
KIND'A SQUEAMISH ABOUT MURDER, HUH... WHEN IT'S YOURS!
WELL, DON'T SWEAT IT! I'M JUST HANGIN' YOU LOWLIFES UP TO DRY!
NICE PREVIEW, BIG BOY!
NOW, LET'S SEE IF THERE'S STILL TIME TO HALT THE FEATURE ATTRACTION!
SLOWLY AND QUIETLY, MY FRIENDS!
IT TOOK ONLY THE TECHNOLOGY OF EDISON TO LOCATE THE SERPENTS' STUDIOS...
BUT IT WILL TAKE THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON TO DECIDE UPON OUR NEXT STEP!
RIGHT AS USUAL, ANDROID!
AND, IT'LL ALSO TAKE THE PATIENCE OF JOB...
...TO STOP FROM PULVERIZING THEM, AND HANG THE CONSEQUENCES!
16

AND THIS IS WHAT THE AVENGERS SEE AND HEAR FROM THE DARKENED SHADOWS OF A ONCE-BRIGHT TV STUDIO... A TABLEAU OF ALL THAT IS VILEST IN MAN... A PANORAMA OF PERVERSITY... A LITANY OF SHEER, UNRELIEVED, UNREASONING HATRED...!
SAY IT WITH ME, AMERICA! LET ALL REPEAT THE SACRED SERPENT OATH!
"AS THE FIRST SERPENT DROVE ADAM AND EVE FROM EDEN..."
"SO SHALL WE DRIVE FROM THIS LAND THE UNFIT... THE FOREIGN-BORN ...THE INFERIOR!"
"WE ARE... THE SONS OF THE SERPENT!"
I'VE NEVER BEEN SICK IN PUBLIC BEFORE, BUT...
AND NOW ...BRING FORTH THE PANTHER!
YES...THE PANTHER...!
HERE HE IS, SUPREME ONE!
HE MUST PAY FOR HIS SINS... BEFORE THE EYES OF THE NATION!
AND PAY HE SHALL, MY FELLOW SERPENTS!
BUT FIRST, LET US BEHOLD AT LAST THE FACE OF THE PANTHER...
THE FACE OF AMERICA'S FOE!!
AND WHY SHOUDN'T I BE ITS FOE, SERPENT?
NO BLACK AMERICAN CAN REST ...WHILE A WHITE AMERICAN LIVES!!
17

DO YOU HEAR, WHITE AMERICA?
HE STANDS GUILTY OF TREASON--- CONDEMNED BY WORDS FROM HIS OWN MOUTH!
CAN THERE NOW BE ANY SLIGHTEST HESITATION TO MAKE THIS COUNTRY YOUR OWN ONCE MORE?
CAN THERE BE ANY LINGERING DOUBT OF A VAST BLACK CONSPIRACY TO ENSLAVE AMERICA?
THE SERPENTS SAY---NO!!
WE CAME AS SOON AS WE COULD, T'CHALLA!
SNAP!
BUT, IF WE HAD RESCUED THE WRONG PANTHER---
YOUR LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN FORFEIT!
YOU BELIEVED IN ME, AVENGER... THAT'S WHAT REALLY MATTERS!
WHO IN BLAZES ARE YOU TALKING TO..?
THE PANTHER --- FREE!
YES, MY FRIEND... FREE---
---IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!
MASTER! MASTER!
THE SERPENT-CHAMBER BEHIND YOU---IT'S FALLING!
NO---IT CAN'T--- NOT NOW!
THE CHAMBER SHATTERED--- AND, WITHIN IT---
ANOTHER SUPREME ONE---AND ANOTHER PANTHER!
"ANOTHER SUPREME ONE" IS RIGHT, LACKEY!
BUT NOT "ANOTHER PANTHER."
18


JUST... THE TRUE PANTHER!!
SUPREME ONE--- YOU'VE GOTTA HELP ME!
HE'LL KILL ME... AND YOU MADE ME DO IT..!
LOUDER, SCUM--- FOR ALL THE WORLD TO HEAR!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAWKING, YOU SIMPERING FOOLS!
GET THEM--- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
CORRECTION, CREEPS!
IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE... FOR BOTH'A YOU BOBBSEY TWINS!
IN FACT, I'M BETTIN' YOUR SERPENTS ARE DYIN' TO KNOW WHY THEY GOT TWO LEADERS... JUST LIKE I AM!
THAT YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, AVENGER!
STAND BACK--- OR WE FIRE INTO THE AUDIENCE!
THEY... THEY MEAN IT..!
OKAY, BALL-AND-CHAIN!
HERE'S WHERE WE PULL OUR WEIGHT AROUND HERE!
SOME WEIGHT! A COUPLE OF CENTI-GRAMS EACH!
TWO CENTIGRAMS CAN BE A LOT, LADY...
...APPLIED AT THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME!
WHAT IN BLAZES--?
WE.. WE'VE BOTH BEEN UNMASKED..!
DUNN...AND HALE! THEN THEY WERE THE SUPREME SERPENTS!!
19

OF COURSE, YOU COSTUMED CRETINS! DID YOU REALLY FALL FOR OUR RACIST ACT?
DID YOU TRULY THINK WE CARED FOR ANYONE--- ANY CAUSE---
WERE YOU AS MISLED AS THE FAWNING SHEEP WHO FED UPON OUR EVERY EPITHET?
...EXCEPT POWER FOR OURSELVES??
AND NOW, OUR SCHEMES LIE IN RUINS, THANKS TO YOU!
BUT, YOU'VE FOILED YOUR LAST POWER PLAY, AVENGERS!
THESE BLASTERS WILL SEE TO THAT!
WHY YOU--!
SAVE IT, BIG MAN! THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND THEM THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF 'EM FOR US!
HAH! THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE--- MMFFF!
WHAT IN--?
SHOVED THEM AS HARD--- AS I COULD!
AVENGERS HELP!
IF YOU TWO HADN'T SPENT YOUR LIVES MOCKING ALL TRUTH---
---PERHAPS YOU'D HAVE BELIEVED THE ONE THAT HANK PYM TOLD YOU!!
THAT TOOK THE FIGHT OUT OF ALL OF THEM!
IF ONLY WE COULD UNDO THE HARM WHICH A MAN LIKE MONTAGUE HALE HAS DONE TO---MY PEOPLE!
HOW MANY MINDS CAN A VIPER LIKE HIM POISON AGAINST OUR CAUSE?
DON'T UNDER-RATE PEOPLE, MONICA!
MOST OF THEM KNOW THAT A CAUSE MAY BE RIGHT---THOUGH A LEADER OR TWO BE WRONG!
THEN---MAYBE I'VE LOST A SINGING CAREER TONIGHT---
---AND GAINED A NEW CAREER--- A WORTHIER PURPOSE---!
YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT, GIRL---
BUT SO HAS... THE BLACK PANTHER!!
THE END? HARDLY..!

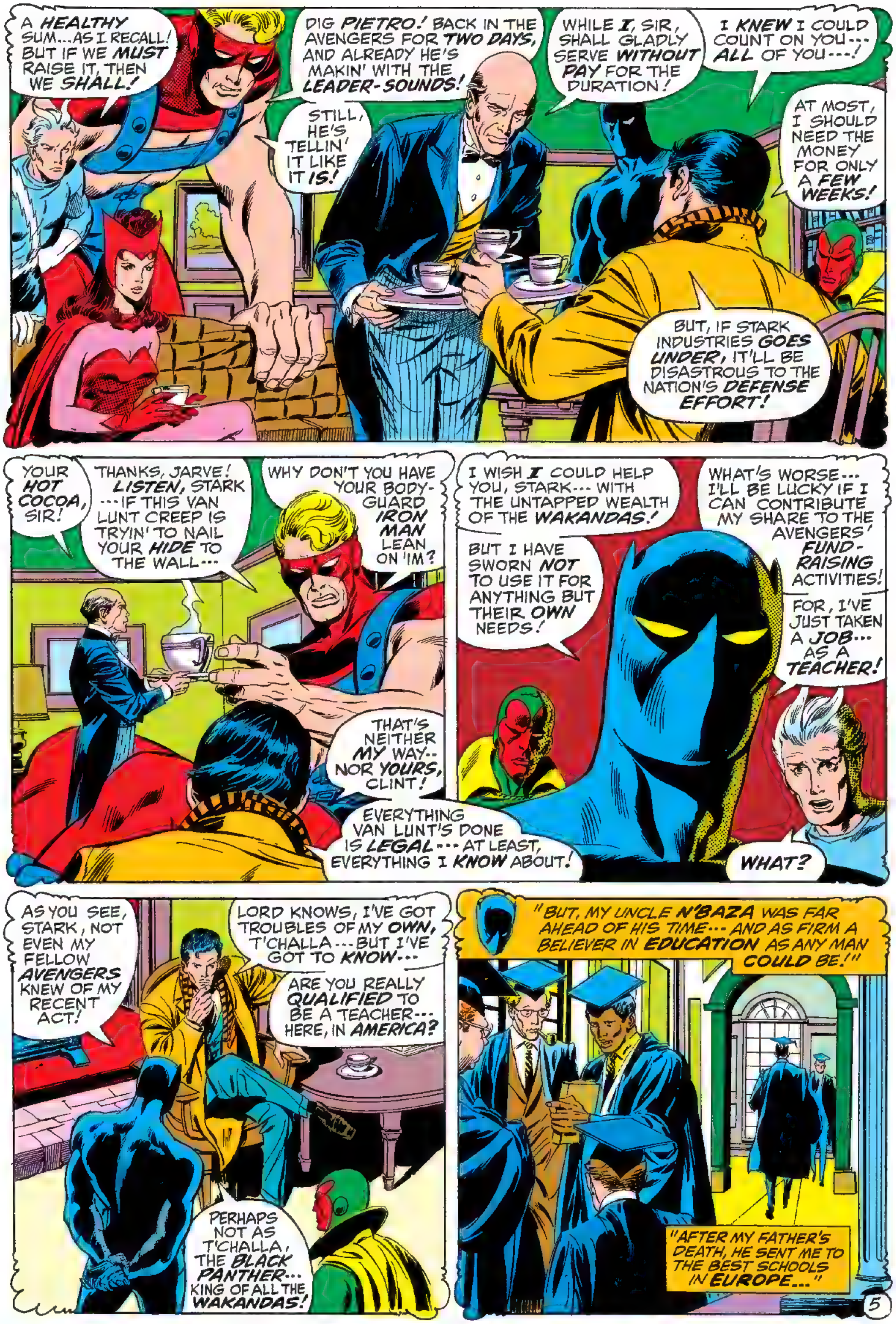
AVENGERS
15¢
77
JUN
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
FOR HIRE: THE AVENGERS!
WORK, FOOLS, WORK!! YOU'VE CONFIRMED MY OPINION OF HUMAN NATURE!
JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE... THE AVENGERS CAN BE BOUGHT!!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®
HEROES FOR HIRE!
A MURKY MONDAY MORNING IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK--- BUT, FOR A HANDFUL OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND WIDE-EYED PASSERS-BY, DEFINITELY A MORNING TO REMEMBER..!
I---I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
POST NO BILLS
GOLIATH JUST POPPED UP OUT OF NOWHERE... AND PUNCHED A HOLE IN THAT BUILDING!!
BDOOM!
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • JOHN BUSCEMA ARTIST
TOM PALMER, EMBELLISHER
SAM ROSEN, LETTERER

PUNCH A HOLE IN IT, NOTHING!
HE'S DEMOLISHING THE WHOLE THING--- WITH HIS BARE HANDS!
BUT, WHY? WHY?
NEVER MIND THE WHY AND WHEREFORE, LADY!
KRRKKK
SNEAK A PEEK INSIDE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE PLACE---
---THERE'S ANOTHER AVENGER!
IT'S THAT GUY QUICKSILVER--- KNOCKING DOWN WALLS LIKE A HUMAN PIN-BALL!
PTAK!
THAT'S NOT ALL! WHO'S THAT GIRL--- AND WHAT'S SHE DOING TO THE CORNERSTONE?
THAT'S THE ONE THEY CALL--- THE SCARLET WITCH!
THEN, SHE'S BACK WITH THE AVENGERS ---AND SHAKING UP THINGS WITH HER HEX POWER!
KRUMMBBLL
AVENGERS, MY EYE! THOSE HOOLIGANS ARE A MENACE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY!
IF IT IS--- WHO'S GOING TO STOP THEM?
COOL IT, GRANNY! MAYBE THIS IS THEIR NEW BAG!
WAIT! LOOK-- UP THERE IN THE SKY!
IT'S THAT ANDROID AVENGER--- I THINK HE'S CALLED THE VISION!
BUT, HE'S JUST FLOATING OVER THE ROOF--- LIKE HE WAS LIGHTER THAN AIR!
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
2.

JUST THEN, THE VISION ANSWERS THE GAPING CROWD IN HIS OWN WORDLESS FASHION, BY BECOMING FAR, FAR HEAVIER THAN MERE AIR, AND DROPPING TO THE ROOF...
...NOT TO MENTION THRU THE ROOF...
...AND THRU THE FIVE INTERVENING FLOORS 'TWIXT HIMSELF AND THE SOLID EARTH BELOW..!
HOLY TOLEDO! THE RADIO REPORT WAS RIGHT!
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT HERE TOO LATE!
YEAH! THAT PLACE IS AN INSURANCE-MAN'S NIGHTMARE!
HOLD IT, BLUE-BOYS! THIS WHOLE SCENE AIN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!
OKAY, BIG BOY--- THEN JUST WHAT IN BLAZES IS IT?
FILL ME IN QUICK ... BEFORE I RUN IN ALL THIRTY FEET OF YOU!
I SHALL FILL YOU IN, OFFICER... AS YOU HAVE SELDOM BEEN FILLED IN BEFORE!
HUH?
HEY--- I KNOW THAT CAR!
MISTER, EVERY TWO-WEEK ROOKIE ON A BEAT KNOWS THAT CAR...
AND YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT!
3

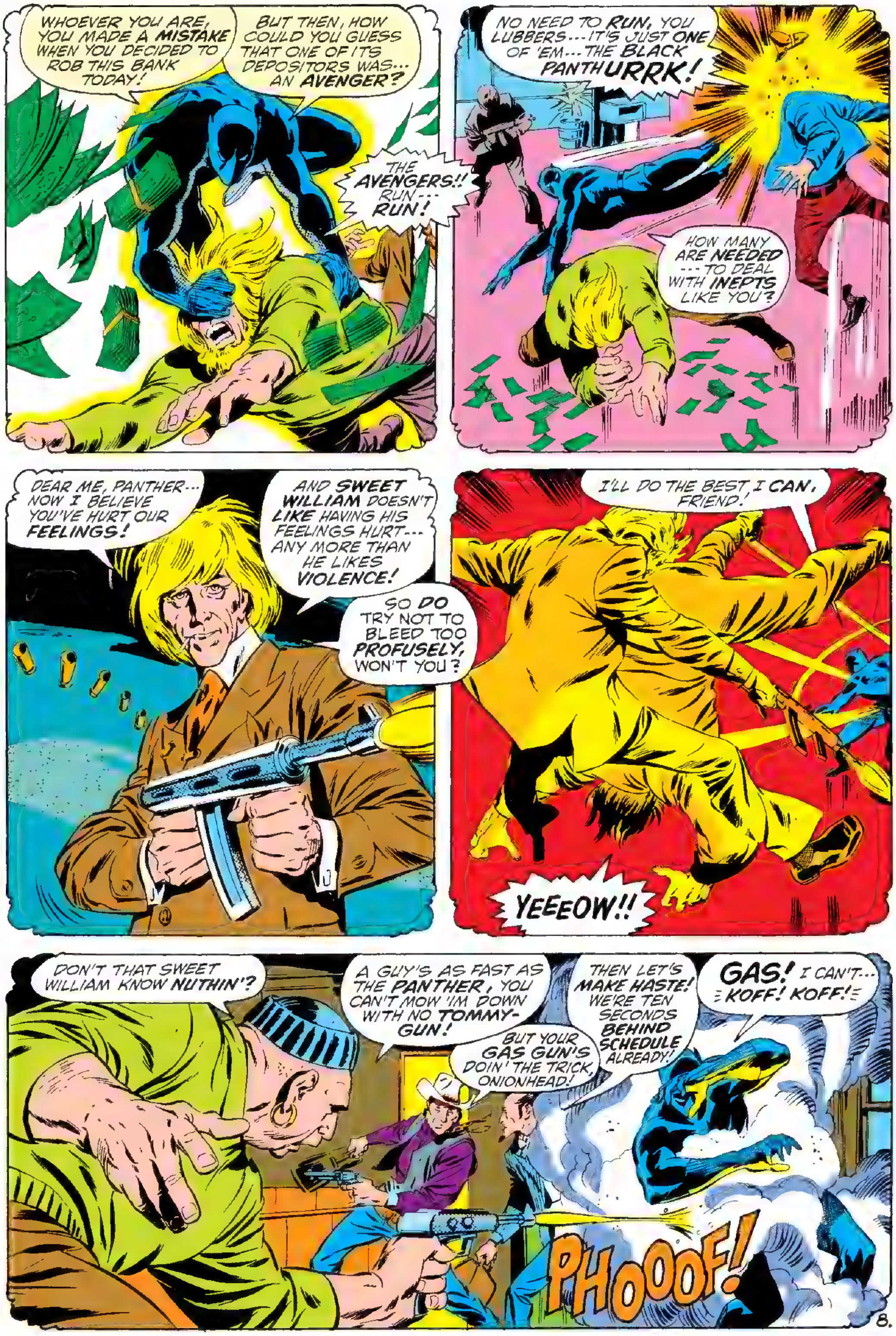
THAT IS CORRECT, OFFICER--- I AM INDEED CORNELIUS VAN LUNT!
I HIRED THOSE FOUR AVENGERS TO DEMOLISH THAT BUILDING...
...ON PROPERTY WHICH, AS THIS DEED AFFIRMS, IS MINE!
SORRY, MR. VAN LUNT! NO ONE TOLD US!
Deed of Sale
WE THOUGHT THE CITY PLANNED TO BUY THAT LAND ---TO PUT UP A PLAYGROUND!
SO IT DID.. UNTIL I PURCHASED THE LAND OUT FROM UNDER IT THIS MORNING!
WILKINS, GIVE OUR SUPER-ENDOWED FRIENDS THEIR MONETARY REWARD! I DON'T WANT TO RISK STUMBLING OVER A STRAY BRICK!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, MR. VAN LUNT!
AND THAT, WILKINS, IS WHAT I SAY!
WE'LL TAKE IT, SMALL FRY-- 'CAUSE WE EARNED IT ALL LEGAL-LIKE!
BUT IF WE'D KNOWN THAT BIT ABOUT THE PLAY-GROUND...
SIR, MY EMPLOYER IS IMMUNE TO YOUR VERBAL ASSAULTS!
AND THAT IS WHAT MY EMPLOYER RIGHTFULLY CARES ABOUT!--PROFIT!
NOW THAT YOU HAVE SO SWIFTLY RAZED THE PROPERTY, HE WILL TURN A TIDY PROFIT SELLING IT TO THE CITY!
WHY DID THE AVENGERS EVER BECOME ALLIED WITH THAT--- PROFITEER?
NOT THAT WE HAD MUCH CHOICE..!
"IT BEGAN WITH A LATE-NIGHT VISIT FROM TONY STARK, THE MUNITIONS MAGNATE WHO LEGALLY OWNS AVENGERS MANSION...!"
WHY, MR. STARK... WHAT AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE!
UNEXPECTED, JARVIS--- BUT HARDLY A PLEASURE!
I MUST SPEAK TO THE AVENGERS --AND TO YOU--- AT ONCE!
...SO THAT'S THE STORY, PEOPLE!
TO KEEP ON AN EVEN KEEL, MY LAWYERS TELL ME I'LL NEED TO CALL ON ALL MY FINANCIAL RESOURCES...
I'M FIGHTING OFF A FINANCIAL POWER PLAY BY A GUY NAMED VAN LUNT, WHO'S OUT TO TAKE OR BREAK STARK INDUSTRIES!
--INCLUDING THE BACK RENT THAT'S TECHNICALLY DUE ON AVENGERS MANSION!
4

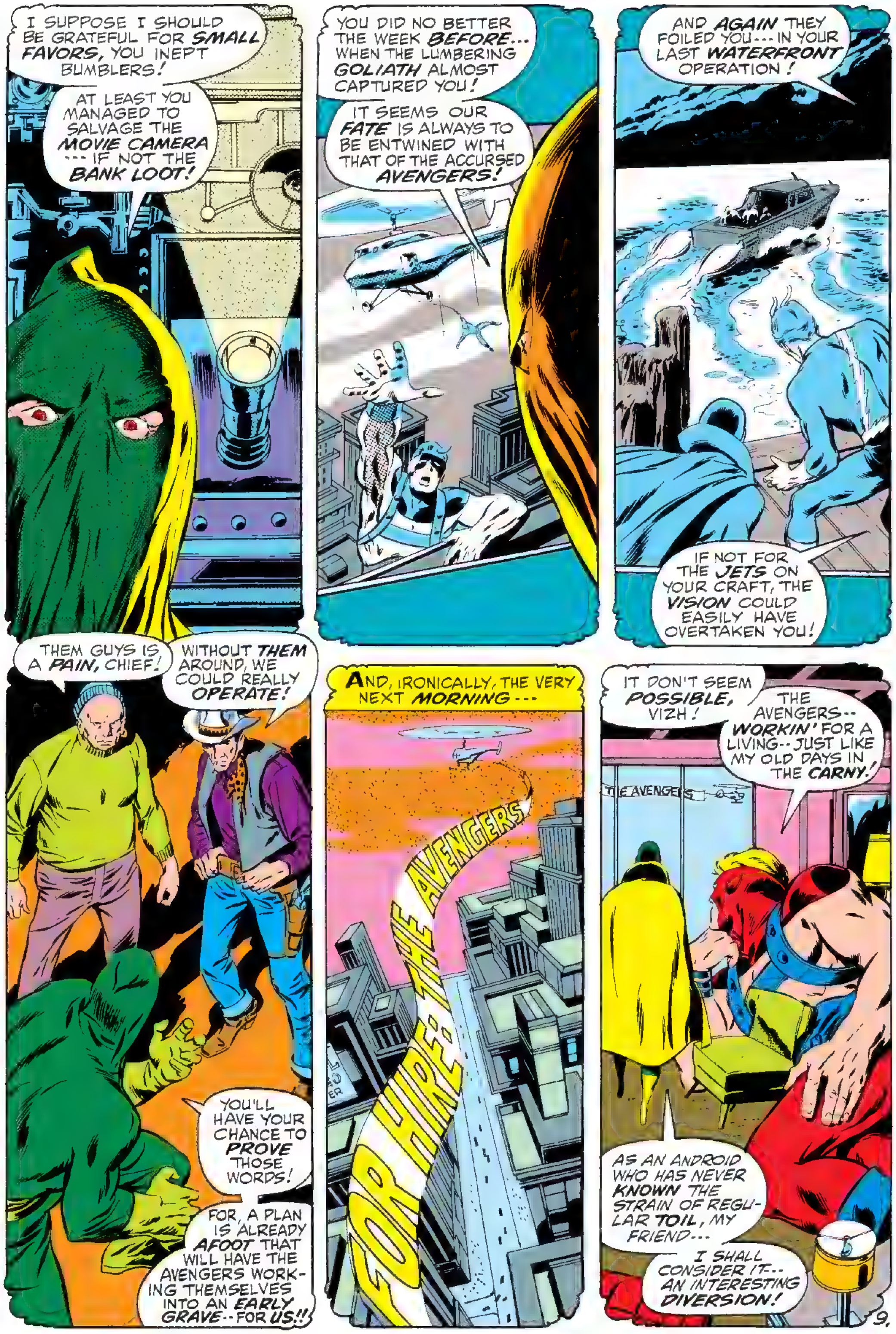


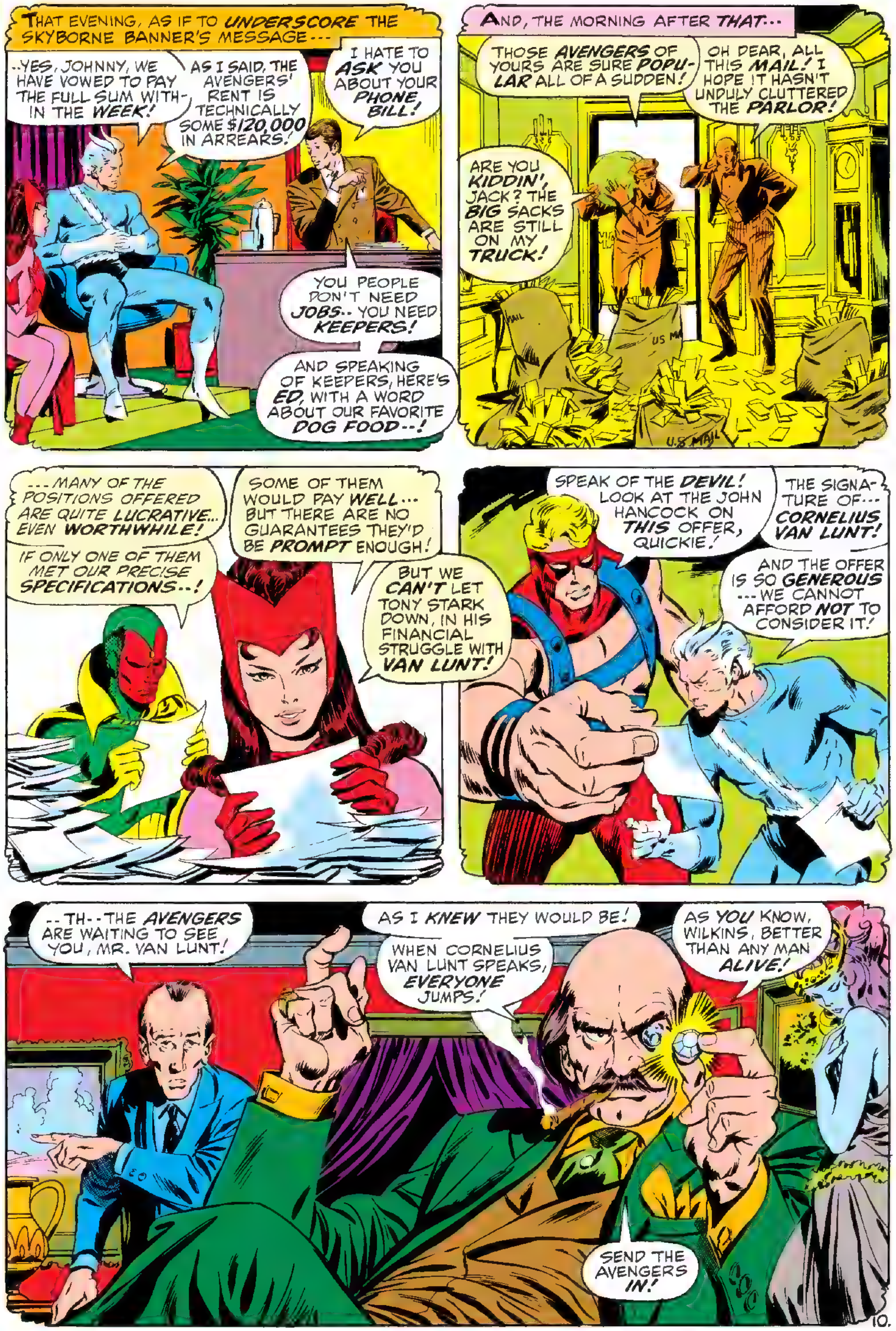
A HEALTHY SUM...AS I RECALL! BUT IF WE MUST RAISE IT, THEN WE SHALL!
DIG PIETRO! BACK IN THE AVENGERS FOR TWO DAYS, AND ALREADY HE'S MAKIN' WITH THE LEADER-SOUNDS!
STILL, HE'S TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS!
WHILE I, SIR, SHALL GLADLY SERVE WITHOUT PAY FOR THE DURATION!
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU--- ALL OF YOU---!
AT MOST, I SHOULD NEED THE MONEY FOR ONLY A FEW WEEKS!
BUT, IF STARK INDUSTRIES GOES UNDER, IT'LL BE DISASTROUS TO THE NATION'S DEFENSE EFFORT!
YOUR HOT COCOA, SIR!
THANKS, JARVE! LISTEN, STARK ---IF THIS VAN LUNT CREEP IS TRYIN' TO NAIL YOUR HIDE TO THE WALL---
WHY DON'T YOU HAVE YOUR BODY-GUARD IRON MAN LEAN ON 'IM?
THAT'S NEITHER MY WAY-- NOR YOURS, CLINT!
EVERYTHING VAN LUNT'S DONE IS LEGAL--- AT LEAST, EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT!
I WISH I COULD HELP YOU, STARK--- WITH THE UNTAPPED WEALTH OF THE WAKANDAS!
BUT I HAVE SWORN NOT TO USE IT FOR ANYTHING BUT THEIR OWN NEEDS!
WHAT'S WORSE--- I'LL BE LUCKY IF I CAN CONTRIBUTE MY SHARE TO THE AVENGERS' FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES!
FOR, I'VE JUST TAKEN A JOB--- AS A TEACHER!
WHAT?
AS YOU SEE, STARK, NOT EVEN MY FELLOW AVENGERS KNEW OF MY RECENT ACT!
LORD KNOWS, I'VE GOT TROUBLES OF MY OWN, T'CHALLA--- BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW---
ARE YOU REALLY QUALIFIED TO BE A TEACHER--- HERE, IN AMERICA?
PERHAPS NOT AS T'CHALLA, THE BLACK PANTHER--- KING OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!
"BUT, MY UNCLE N'BAZA WAS FAR AHEAD OF HIS TIME--- AND AS FIRM A BELIEVER IN EDUCATION AS ANY MAN COULD BE!"
"AFTER MY FATHER'S DEATH, HE SENT ME TO THE BEST SCHOOLS IN EUROPE..."
5

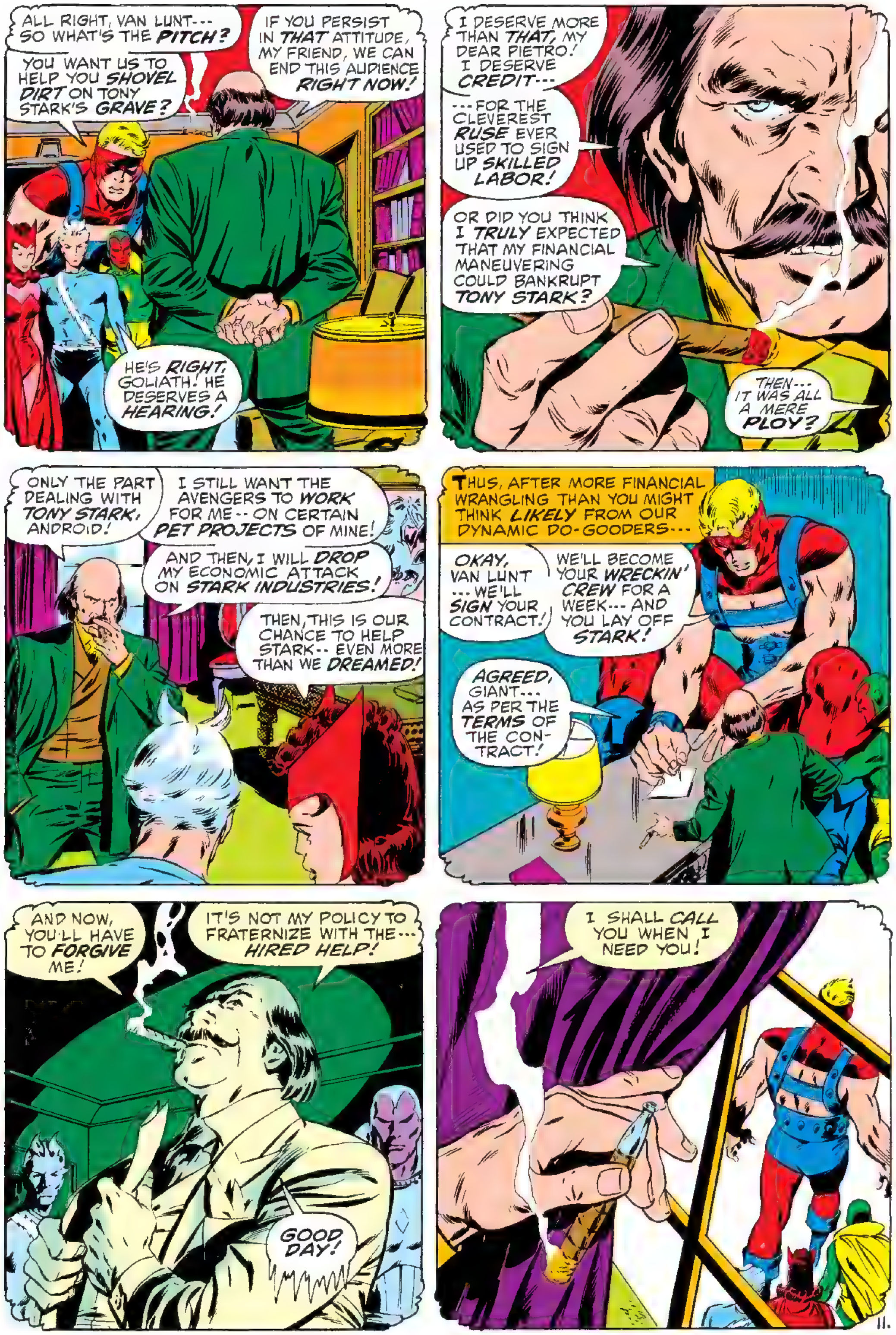
"... AND HERE IN AMERICA...!
HOW FORESIGHTED OF MY UNCLE... TO SEE THAT I HAVE A LEGAL AMERICAN NAME AS WELL AS MY TRIBAL ONE!
FOR, WHO CAN KNOW WHAT DESTINY MAY HOLD IN STORE FOR THE HEIR OF THE BLACK PANTHER THRONE?
BUT NOT EVEN N'BAZA COULD HAVE GUESSED THAT, ONE DAY, I WOULD COME TO THIS COUNTRY... TO STAY!
OR THAT I WOULD VIRTUALLY SURRENDER THE PANTHER THRONE --- TO HELP MANKIND FIRST AS AN AVENGER...
-- AND THEN, AS A TEACHER!
ALL OF WHICH, AVENGERS, ONLY MAKES ME SADDER ABOUT THIS BLASTED RENT BUSINESS...
ESPECIALLY SINCE IT COMES TO ... $2,000 A MONTH!
AS WE SAID, MR. STARK, WE SHALL RAISE IT.. AND QUICKLY!
AND NOW, FORBEARING ONE, WE MUST ABANDON THE VIEWPOINTS OF THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES ... AND SWITCH TO A SCENE THAT WAS TRANSPIRING ELSEWHERE AT THAT SELFSAME MOMENT...
... AMONG A SOMEWHAT LESS SAVORY BAND OF INDIVIDUALS...
DEAR ME.. I DO BELIEVE I HEAR OUR ESTEEMED EMPLOYER APPROACHING!
HE WON'T LIKE IT, WHEN HE FINDS WE'VE BEEN PLAYING CARDS AGAIN --- ON HIS TIME!
OH YEAH? WELL, A FAT LOT THAT MASKED SLOB CAN DO ABOUT IT!
YOU TELL 'EM, PODNUH!
THERE IS NO NEED TO TELL ME, PECOS... SINCE I HEARD EVERY WORD THAT YOU AND JOE THE GORILLA UTTERED!
STILL, IF YOU'D CARE TO REPEAT IT TO MY FACE..
N-NO, THANKS, BOSS... WE WAS JUST HOSSIN' AROUND..!
6

OH YEAH? WELL, JOE THE GORILLA AIN'T THE YELLA-BELLY THAT PECOS IS!
AND NEITHER IS CAP'N SKRAGG!
IN MY DAY WE KNEW HOW TO DEAL WITH LUBBERS LIKE YOU!
WELL, THIS IS NOT YOUR DAY ANY MORE...
IT'S MINE!!
FRAP!
NOW, MY DEAR CAPTAIN, IF YOU'D CARE TO JOIN YOUR HAIRY-FACED FRIEND IN FACING MY WRATH...
WELL, BLOW ME DOWN, MATEY-- BUT CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE?
ANY MORE SUCH JOKES--- AND I'LL FIND A NEW GANG TO SPEND MY MONEY ON!
AW, BOSS... THEY DIDN'T MEAN NUTHIN' --- HONEST!
IT'S JUST THAT WE GET REAL NERVOUS-LIKE, BEIN' CORRALED UP IN HERE ALL THE TIME!
Y-YEAH --- AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW --- JUST WHO WE'RE WORKIN' FOR!
KRONUS.. WHAT KINDA NAME IS THAT FOR THE LEADER OF A GANG?
A CODE NAME, YOU FOOL --- AND THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED KNOW ME BY!
NOW, WITHOUT MORE TIME-WASTING-- STUDY THESE FILMS I JUST DEVELOPED---
AND PERHAPS WE SHALL ALL PROFIT FROM THE EXPERIENCE!
OH DEAR --MORE FILMS?
I DO HOPE THEY'RE NOT TOO VIOLENT!
SILENCE! I GATHERED YOU PACK-RATS TOGETHER BECAUSE EACH OF YOU HAD SPECIAL SKILLS... AND I CHRISTENED YOU THE SPLIT-SECOND SQUAD!
YOU KNOW THESE "HOME-MOVIES" YOU TAKE OF EACH JOB ARE DESIGNED TO IMPROVE YOUR EFFICIENCY.. YOUR TIMING!
FOR INSTANCE, ALL WAS GOING SPLENDIDLY IN THIS RECENT BANK HOLD-UP UNTIL...
7


WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU MADE A MISTAKE WHEN YOU DECIDED TO ROB THIS BANK TODAY!
BUT THEN, HOW COULD YOU GUESS THAT ONE OF ITS DEPOSITORS WAS... AN AVENGER?
THE AVENGERS!! RUN--- RUN!
NO NEED TO RUN, YOU LUBBERS...IT'S JUST ONE OF 'EM...THE BLACK PANTHURRK!
HOW MANY ARE NEEDED --- TO DEAL WITH INEPTS LIKE YOU?
DEAR ME, PANTHER... NOW I BELIEVE YOU'VE HURT OUR FEELINGS!
AND SWEET WILLIAM DOESN'T LIKE HAVING HIS FEELINGS HURT--- ANY MORE THAN HE LIKES VIOLENCE!
SO DO TRY NOT TO BLEED TOO PROFUSELY, WON'T YOU?
I'LL DO THE BEST I CAN, FRIEND!
YEEEOW!!
DON'T THAT SWEET WILLIAM KNOW NUTHIN'?
A GUY'S AS FAST AS THE PANTHER, YOU CAN'T MOW 'IM DOWN WITH NO TOMMY-GUN!
BUT YOUR GAS GUN'S DOIN' THE TRICK, ONIONHEAD!
THEN LET'S MAKE HASTE! WE'RE TEN SECONDS BEHIND SCHEDULE ALREADY!
GAS! I CAN'T... KOFF! KOFF!
PHOOOF!


I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR SMALL FAVORS, YOU INEPT BUMBLERS!
AT LEAST YOU MANAGED TO SALVAGE THE MOVIE CAMERA --- IF NOT THE BANK LOOT!
YOU DID NO BETTER THE WEEK BEFORE... WHEN THE LUMBERING GOLIATH ALMOST CAPTURED YOU!
IT SEEMS OUR FATE IS ALWAYS TO BE ENTWINED WITH THAT OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!
AND AGAIN THEY FOILED YOU--- IN YOUR LAST WATERFRONT OPERATION!
IF NOT FOR THE JETS ON YOUR CRAFT, THE VISION COULD EASILY HAVE OVERTAKEN YOU!
THEM GUYS IS A PAIN, CHIEF!
WITHOUT THEM AROUND, WE COULD REALLY OPERATE!
YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE THOSE WORDS!
FOR, A PLAN IS ALREADY AFOOT THAT WILL HAVE THE AVENGERS WORKING THEMSELVES INTO AN EARLY GRAVE--FOR US!!
AND, IRONICALLY, THE VERY NEXT MORNING---
THE AVENGERS FOR HIRE
IT DON'T SEEM POSSIBLE, VIZH!
THE AVENGERS-- WORKIN' FOR A LIVING-- JUST LIKE MY OLD DAYS IN THE CARNY!
THE AVENGERS
AS AN ANDROID WHO HAS NEVER KNOWN THE STRAIN OF REGULAR TOIL, MY FRIEND---
I SHALL CONSIDER IT-- AN INTERESTING DIVERSION!


THAT EVENING, AS IF TO UNDERSCORE THE SKYBORNE BANNER'S MESSAGE---
..YES, JOHNNY, WE HAVE VOWED TO PAY THE FULL SUM WITH-IN THE WEEK!
AS I SAID, THE AVENGERS' RENT IS TECHNICALLY SOME $120,000 IN ARREARS!
I HATE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR PHONE BILL!
YOU PEOPLE DON'T NEED JOBS.. YOU NEED KEEPERS!
AND SPEAKING OF KEEPERS, HERE'S ED, WITH A WORD ABOUT OUR FAVORITE DOG FOOD--!
AND, THE MORNING AFTER THAT...
THOSE AVENGERS OF YOURS ARE SURE POPU-LAR ALL OF A SUDDEN!
OH DEAR, ALL THIS MAIL! I HOPE IT HASN'T UNDULY CLUTTERED THE PARLOR!
ARE YOU KIDDIN', JACK? THE BIG SACKS ARE STILL ON MY TRUCK!
---MANY OF THE POSITIONS OFFERED ARE QUITE LUCRATIVE... EVEN WORTHWHILE!
IF ONLY ONE OF THEM MET OUR PRECISE SPECIFICATIONS--!
SOME OF THEM WOULD PAY WELL... BUT THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES THEY'D BE PROMPT ENOUGH!
BUT WE CAN'T LET TONY STARK DOWN, IN HIS FINANCIAL STRUGGLE WITH VAN LUNT!
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL! LOOK AT THE JOHN HANCOCK ON THIS OFFER, QUICKIE!
THE SIGNA-TURE OF--- CORNELIUS VAN LUNT!
AND THE OFFER IS SO GENEROUS ---WE CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO CONSIDER IT!
--TH--THE AVENGERS ARE WAITING TO SEE YOU, MR. VAN LUNT!
AS I KNEW THEY WOULD BE!
WHEN CORNELIUS VAN LUNT SPEAKS, EVERYONE JUMPS!
AS YOU KNOW, WILKINS, BETTER THAN ANY MAN ALIVE!
SEND THE AVENGERS IN!


ALL RIGHT, VAN LUNT--- SO WHAT'S THE PITCH?
YOU WANT US TO HELP YOU SHOVEL DIRT ON TONY STARK'S GRAVE?
IF YOU PERSIST IN THAT ATTITUDE, MY FRIEND, WE CAN END THIS AUDIENCE RIGHT NOW!
HE'S RIGHT, GOLIATH! HE DESERVES A HEARING!
I DESERVE MORE THAN THAT, MY DEAR PIETRO! I DESERVE CREDIT---
---FOR THE CLEVEREST RUSE EVER USED TO SIGN UP SKILLED LABOR!
OR DID YOU THINK I TRULY EXPECTED THAT MY FINANCIAL MANEUVERING COULD BANKRUPT TONY STARK?
THEN--- IT WAS ALL A MERE PLOY?
ONLY THE PART DEALING WITH TONY STARK, ANDROID!
I STILL WANT THE AVENGERS TO WORK FOR ME -- ON CERTAIN PET PROJECTS OF MINE!
AND THEN, I WILL DROP MY ECONOMIC ATTACK ON STARK INDUSTRIES!
THEN, THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO HELP STARK -- EVEN MORE THAN WE DREAMED!
THUS, AFTER MORE FINANCIAL WRANGLING THAN YOU MIGHT THINK LIKELY FROM OUR DYNAMIC DO-GOODERS---
OKAY, VAN LUNT --- WE'LL SIGN YOUR CONTRACT!
WE'LL BECOME YOUR WRECKIN' CREW FOR A WEEK--- AND YOU LAY OFF STARK!
AGREED, GIANT--- AS PER THE TERMS OF THE CON-TRACT!
AND NOW, YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME!
IT'S NOT MY POLICY TO FRATERNIZE WITH THE--- HIRED HELP!
GOOD DAY!
I SHALL CALL YOU WHEN I NEED YOU!
11.

AND NOW, OUR FATEFUL FLASHBACK ENDED, WE RETURN YOU TO THE PRESENT--- AND A PROVOCATIVE GLIMPSE INTO A CERTAIN GHETTO HIGH SCHOOL---!
--AND THIS TRIBAL MASK WAS WORN BY THE VILLAGE WITCH DOCTOR, TO WARD OFF EVIL!
NOW, ANY QUESTIONS?
JUST ONE, TEACH-- WHO'D THE WITCH-MAN EXPECT TO SPOOK WITH THAT THING?
FAT ALBERT?
AND WHERE'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT RIG, ANYHOW?
OH, LET'S JUST SAY, JOEY---
--THAT I PICKED IT UP SECOND-HAND!
NOW, AS I WAS SAYING---
12
"I BROUGHT THIS TO CLASS TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF YOUR HERITAGE--- ONE AS ANCIENT AND PROUD AS THAT OF ANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD---"
--A BIRTHRIGHT THAT LAYS AS GREAT A STRESS ON COURAGE --ON BRAVERY--- AS MEDIEVAL EUROPE DID ON CHIVALRY---!"
"FOR IN ANY LAND... ANY CLIME-- A MAN MUST STILL BE--- A MAN!"
YOU SOLD US, MR. CHARLES!
NOW, HOW ABOUT TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS ABOUT A GREAT-BLACK-WARRIOR OF THE NOW GENERATION?
BY THAT, JOEY, I TAKE IT YOU MEAN---?
YOU KNOW IT, MAN! THE FALCON!!
HMMM--!
13

WHILE, SOME BLOCKS TO THE SOUTH, A SLIGHTLY MORE SINISTER SCENE IS BEING ENACTED...!
AT LAST--- THE HOUR IS AT HAND!
THE TIME WHEN WE SHALL DESTROY THE INFERNAL AVENGERS-- FOR-EVER!
TODAY'S CRIME SHALL NET US NOT JUST MONEY... BUT SHALL MAKE US A GROUP TO BE RECKONED WITH!
JUST MONEY? WE AIN'T PULLED OFF A WINNIN' JOB IN WEEKS!
WHAT DO YOU CARE, MATEY? THE CHIEF STILL PAYS YOU, DON'T HE?
I DO BELIEVE OUR EMPLOYER IS INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY!
ENOUGH IDLE SPECULATION!
THIS MIDTOWN BANK IS OUR TARGET OF THE DAY... TAKE NOTE!
BUT WHAT OF-- THE AVENGERS?
YEAH! I DON'T HANKER AFTER RUNNIN' INTO THOSE HOMBRES!
MY FRIENDS, WHEN I DETONATE THIS MEAGER DEVICE A BRIEF HOUR FROM NOW---
THE COSTUMED FOOLS NOW--- SHALL BE THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES---!
MEANWHILE--- TO COIN A PHRASE---
IT IS TIME, AVENGERS!
ONE FINAL TASK TO PERFORM FOR CORNELIUS VAN LUNT, AND OUR OBLIGATION TO HIM WILL BE COMPLETED!
PIETRO--- WHY DO YOU BROOD SO GLUMLY?
YOU KNOW THE REASON, ANDROID---
I DO NOT LIKE AIDING A MAN LIKE VAN LUNT--- FOR WHATEVER REASON!
WE ALL SHARE YOUR FEELINGS, MY BROTHER--- BUT WE HAVE PLEDGED OUR WORD!
COME... WE MUST GO!
14

YOU GO AHEAD, AVENGERS--- AND I SHALL FOLLOW WHEN I CAN!
BUT FIRST--- THERE IS SOMETHING THAT I MUST DO---!
WITHIN MINUTES, MIDTOWN MANHATTAN GASPS, AS---
I KNOW, MISTER, I KNOW! I'D ARREST 'EM FOR JAY-WALKIN'---
---EXCEPT THAT THE BIG GUY STEPPED FROM SIDEWALK TO SIDEWALK!
NOW SHOW
---YOU'RE THE SO-CALLED MIGHTY AVENGERS--- JUST THE THREE OF YA?
THE BLACK PANTHER'S BUSY SOMEWHERE ELSE, FELLA!
AN' QUICKSILVER---
---IS PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR, GOLIATH!
WHEW! I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU, BUDDY---
YOU SURE COME ON STRONG!
OKAY, NOW HERE'S THE SCOOP---AS VAN LUNT'S FLUNKY GAVE IT TO ME!
THAT TUNNEL UNDER THE EAST RIVER'S BEEN CONDEMNED FOR YEARS AS UNSAFE--- REGULAR WORK-CREWS WON'T GO NEAR THE THING!
BUT VAN LUNT CONTRACTED FOR YOU GUYS TO FIX IT UP!
SO WHAT'RE YA WAITIN' FOR--- OVERTIME?
THE MORE I THINK ABOUT THIS--- THE MORE I DON'T LIKE IT!
IT'S GOT ALL THE MARKIN'S OF A BIG FAT TRAP!
IT IS TOO LATE TO CONCERN OURSELVES WITH THAT!
PIETRO IS RIGHT! LET US MERELY DO WHAT WE CAME TO DO!
15

OUTSIDE, WHEN THE QUARTET ARE THIRTY SECONDS INTO THE LEAK-STUDDED TUNNEL---
THAT'S IT! PULL HER UP RIGHT HERE!
YOU ARE EXACTLY ON SCHEDULE... A GOOD SIGN!
BOSS, FOR THIS PAY-OFF, WE HADDA BE ON TIME!
YEAH! AFTER TODAY, THEM AVENGERS WON'T FOUL UP NO MORE OF OUR JOBS!
PRECISELY WHAT I HAD IN MIND, MY DEAR GORILLA!
THE OTHER TASKS WHICH OUR COSTUMED STALWARTS PERFORMED WERE BUT THE BUILD-UP!
THIS, AS YOU SO ACCURATELY STATED---
.. IS THE FINAL PAY-OFF!
THE AVENGERS SHOULD BE AT EXACTLY THE CENTER OF THE TUNNEL BY NOW!
THUS, A SINGLE TOUCH OF THIS DEMOLITION SWITCH---
"... AND THEY SHALL NEVER BOTHER US AGAIN!!"
KA-BOOOOOOM!
16

THEN, PROMPTLY AT THE STROKE OF NOON---
MY, UH, CIVILIAN CONTACTS HAVE INFORMED ME OF A LARGE SHIPMENT OF GOLD BARS WHICH ARRIVED AT THIS BANK THIS MORNING!
BUT, YOUR OWN PRIVATE BLITZKRIEG SHALL SWIFTLY RELIEVE THEM OF IT---UNDER MY PERSONAL SUPERVISION!
ALL RIGHT, YOU LUBBERS--- STAND STILL, AND NOBODY GETS HURT!
EXCELLENT! WE ARE OPERATING PRECISELY ACCORDING TO OUR TIME-TABLE!
COVER THEM--- WHILE I RELIEVE THE VAULT OF ITS CONTENTS!
HAH! THERE IT IS!
SO FEW PEOPLE KNEW OF ITS ARRIVAL, THE BANK DID NOT BOTHER TO TAKE ADEQUATE SAFE-GUARDS!
SO, IT TOOK NOTHING BUT PLANNING AND THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE TO---
HEY, BOSS-MAN!
WHILE YOU'RE PALAVERIN' ABOUT THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE---
LOOK WHO JUST PULLED ONE ON US!!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO STARTLED!
WHERE EVIL LURKS--- THERE STRIKES THE BLACK PANTHER!
IT'S THE AVENGER WE DIDN'T KILL! GET HIM!
ZRAPT!
AH--AH'M TRYIN'! BUT HE MOVES LIKE A CON-SARNED JACKRABBIT!
17.

I PREFER THE ANALOGY OF A JUNGLE CAT!
STRANGE... BATTLING THESE THIEVES NO LONGER GIVES ME THE PLEASURE IT ONCE MIGHT HAVE!
NOW, I KEEP THINKING OF MYSELF AS A TEACHER--- ON HIS LUNCH HOUR!
DON'T WORRY, CHIEF! AFTER ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE OF HIM!
THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, FOOL --- IF YOU DON'T GUN HIM DOWN!
BUT-- HOW DID HE KNOW WE'D BE HERE? HOW?
"I THINK I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION---AFTER I DISPOSE OF THAT FORMIDABLE WEAPON!"
SWOOSH!
WHAT? WHO..?
I CONTACTED THE PANTHER--- WITH WHAT YOU AMERICANS SO CRUDELY CALL A WALKIE-TALKIE!
QUICKSILVER!
THEN --- ONE OF THE AVENGERS SOMEHOW ESCAPED MY TRAP!
CORRECTION, SOCK-HEAD! ALL OF 'EM DID!
THAT FAST-GUY WASN'T LYIN'--- THEY JUST GRABBED THE CHIEF!
THEN LET'S MAKE TRACKS OUTTA HERE, BEFORE---
DON'T LOOK NOW, MY FRIEND---
BUT ONE OF THEM IS BLOCKADING THE DOORWAY!
IF YOU LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS, VILLAINS, YOU WILL SAVE ALL OF US CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE!
TROUBLE TO YOU, YA MEAN! BLAST 'IM!
BRZZZ
BUT-- HE'S AS HARD AS DIAMOND, REMEMBER!
18

THE VISION SAYS NO MORE--- BUT RAISES ONE BULKY, BOOTED FOOT---
---AND, INCREASING ITS MASS A HUNDRED-FOLD, BRINGS IT DOWN LIKE SOME LEAD-WEIGHTED TRIP-HAMMER---
WHROOM!
---WITH SINGULARLY DEVASTATING RESULTS!
THE OTHERS ARE DOWN, MATEY -- BUT I'VE STILL GOT A LAUNCH DOWN BY THE DOCKS!
IF WE CAN BLAST OUR WAY THERE, IT'S CLEAR SAILING ALL THE WAY TO THE CARIBBEAN!
AN' ONLY THAT DAME STANDS IN OUR WAY!
DAME? DON'T MOUTH THAT CREAKING ARCHAISM AT ME, YOU--!
SPROING!
EVEN THE SULTRY SCARLET WITCH DOES NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT DAMAGE HER HEX SPHERE WILL NEXT INFLICT--- BUT THE TWO SEA-FARING SCOUNDRELS SOON LEARN--!
OKAY, HEAD-RAT-- NOW WE'LL SEE HOW YA DIG OL' GOLIATH'S VERSION OF THE SQUEEZE PLAY!
NO, GOLIATH--- DON'T HARM HIM! I WANT TO UNMASK HIM!
I WAS JUST MAKIN' HIM SWEAT A LITTLE, JUNGLE-MAN!
BESIDES, WE ALL KNOW IT'S VAN LUNT--- THE LAST OF THE RED-HOT TYCOONS!
IS HE, GIANT? LOOK AGAIN!
HOLY TOLEDO! IT AIN'T VAN LUNT--- IT'S HIS FLUNKY!
IT'S--HEY! I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE CREEP'S NAME!
19

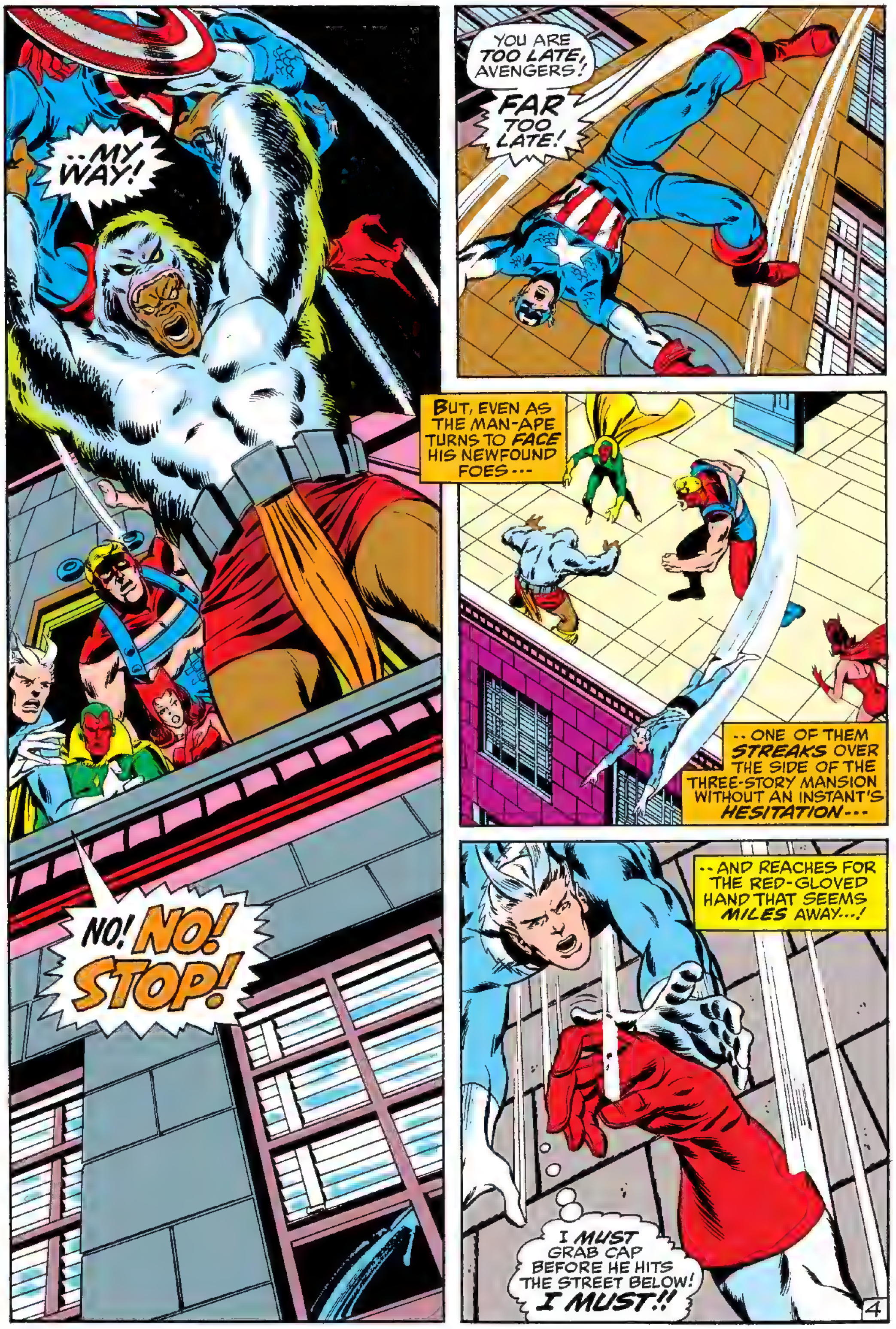
YOU COSTUMED CLOD--- YOU JUST STATED THE REASON WHY I FIRST TURNED TO CRIME---
I INTENDED TO FRAME HIM -- FOR WHAT HE'D DONE TO ME!
---WHY I DESIGNED THIS OUTFIT WHICH GAVE ME THE SAME BUILD AS VAN LUNT!
"FOR, I COULD NEVER FORGET A CERTAIN SCENE--- ALMOST A DECADE AGO---!"
YOU'RE BANKRUPT--- SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL SELL THIS EQUIPMENT TO ME!
BUT-- YOU'RE THE ONE WHOSE COMPANIES DROVE ME OUT OF BUSINESS!
DID I? I HAVE SO MANY ECONOMIC INTERESTS, I CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO REMEMBER WHAT ANY ONE OF THEM DOES!
YES, HE'D RUINED ME, WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHO I WAS!
IN FACT, HE HAD FORGOTTEN ME-- BY THE TIME I APPLIED FOR THE JOB OF HIS FLUNKY!
THEN, YOU HAD A SCHEME UP YOUR SLEEVE---
-- TO PIN OUR MURDERS ON VAN LUNT!
YES! BUT -- I STILL DON'T SEE HOW YOU SURVIVED THAT BLAST!
WE DIDN'T, FRIEND--!
"WE SMELLED A RAT-- SO PIETRO HAD OUR AUTOMATIC SUB STANDING BY NEAR THAT SUNKEN TUNNEL---"
"-- AND WE WERE NOT INSIDE WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED!"
SO, WILKINS, YOU MISERABLE MOUSE-- YOU TRIED TO FRAME ME TO SETTLE AN OLD DEBT!
WELL, HE'S GOT HIS JUST DESSERTS, EH, AVENGERS?
NOW, HERE'S YOUR MONEY FOR---
EH? WHY ARE YOU ALL WALKING AWAY FROM ME LIKE THAT?
CAN YOU NOT GUESS, HUMAN--- EVEN NOW?
WILKINS SHALL PAY FOR HIS CRIMES, VAN LUNT-- BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT THAT HE DO SO!
BUT, YOUR CRIMES ARE AGAINST THE HEART-- THE VERY SOUL OF MAN!
AND ONE DAY YOU SHALL PAY FOR THEM AS SURELY AS THERE IS JUSTICE LEFT IN THE WORLD!
THUS SWEAR--- THE AVENGERS!!
AND ON THAT DAY, PILGRIM--- YOU'LL BE RIGHT HERE TO SEE IT!
Finis
20

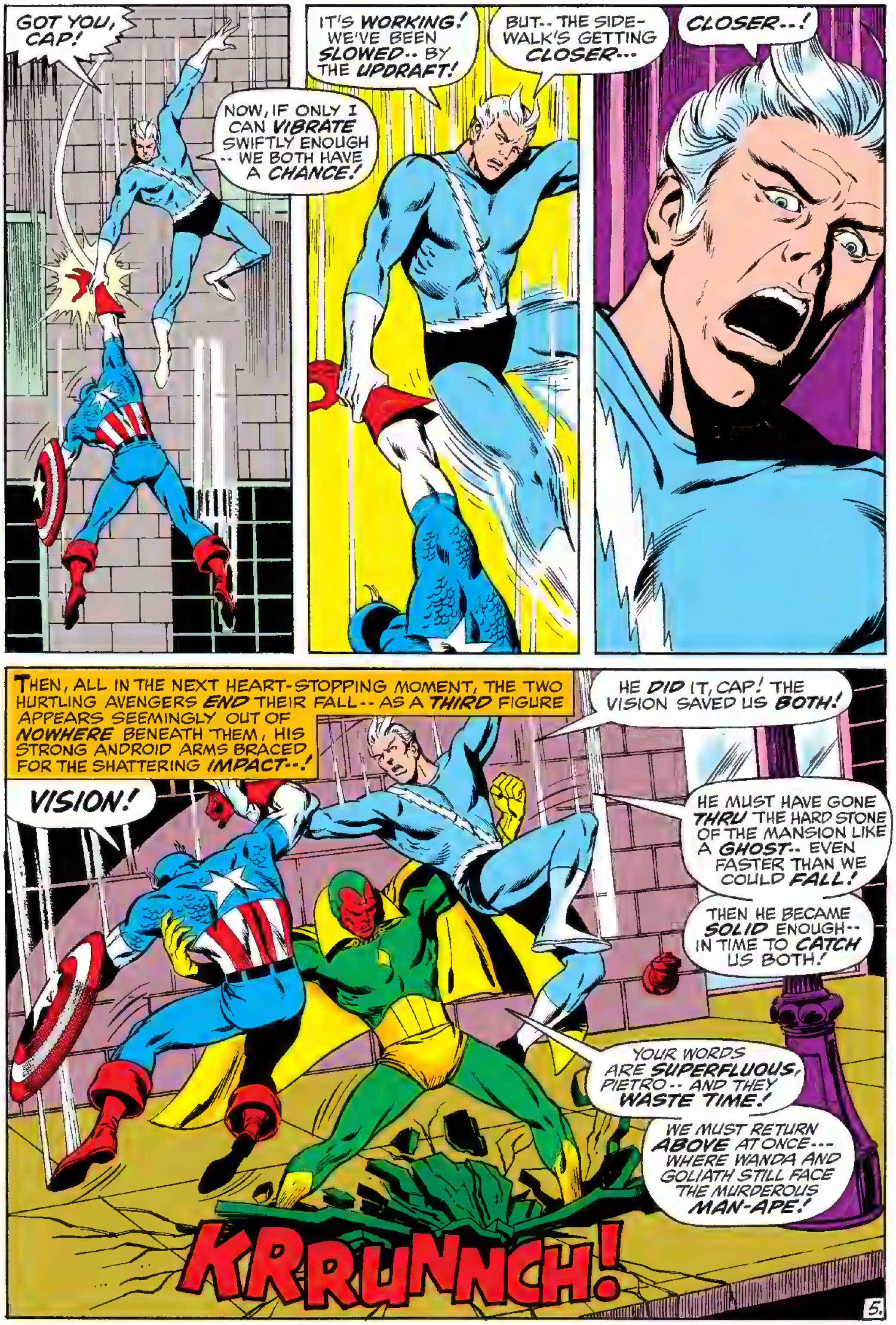
AVENGERS
15¢
78
JULY
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
TWO AVENGERS DOWN--- AND FOUR TO GO!
THIS IS THE DAY OF THE MAN-APE!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®
THE CITY IS QUIET TONIGHT--AND PEACEFUL!
I WONDER WHY THE AVENGERS SUMMONED ME--!?
IT WAS NOT THEY WHO CALLED YOU HERE, CAPTAIN AMERICA...
IT WAS I!
THE MAN-APE ALWAYS STRIKES TWICE!
STAN LEE EDITOR
ROY THOMAS WRITER
SAL BUSCEMA ARTIST
TOM PALMER EMBELLISHER
SAM ROSEN LETTERER

WHO IN BLUE BLAZES..?
YOU HAVE NO NEED TO KNOW MY TRUE NAME, FOOL!
FOR, THOSE WHO SPEAK IT DO SO ONLY IN WHISPERS..
..FEARFUL WHISPERS, LEST THEY REACH THE EARS OF--- THE MAN-APE!!
KWHAM!
HE IS FALLEN! HE LIES STILL!
THEN, THE MAN-APE HAS CAPTURED HIS FIRST AVENGER!
OBVIOUSLY THOSE EARS OF YOURS AREN'T AS SHARP AS YOU THINK, FELLA--
THOOOM!

..OR ELSE YOU'D HAVE KNOWN YOU JUST KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME--AND THAT I WAS PLAYING POSSUM!
HUH? WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE YOU GO DOWN?
MORE FORCE THAN YOU CAN MUSTER, LITTLE MAN!
FOR, AS THE TSETSE FLY IS TO THE THICK-HIDED ELEPHANT...
SO ARE YOU TO THE MAN-APE!
SWAT!
AGAIN YOU DROP TO YOUR KNEES, MASKED ONE!
AND THIS TIME, YOU SHALL NEVER RISE AGAIN!
THIS TIME, YOU SHALL FEEL THE FULL POWER OF---
WHAT? YOU RAISED YOUR SHIELD BEFORE YOU-- WITH YOUR LAST OUNCE OF STRENGTH!
STILL, YOU ARE WEAK-- BARELY CONSCIOUS-- AND SO THE BATTLE SHALL END---
FRAK!
3


..MY WAY!
NO! NO! STOP!
YOU ARE TOO LATE, AVENGERS!
FAR TOO LATE!
BUT, EVEN AS THE MAN-APE TURNS TO FACE HIS NEWFOUND FOES---
..ONE OF THEM STREAKS OVER THE SIDE OF THE THREE-STORY MANSION WITHOUT AN INSTANT'S HESITATION---
..AND REACHES FOR THE RED-GLOVED HAND THAT SEEMS MILES AWAY...!
I MUST GRAB CAP BEFORE HE HITS THE STREET BELOW! I MUST!!
4

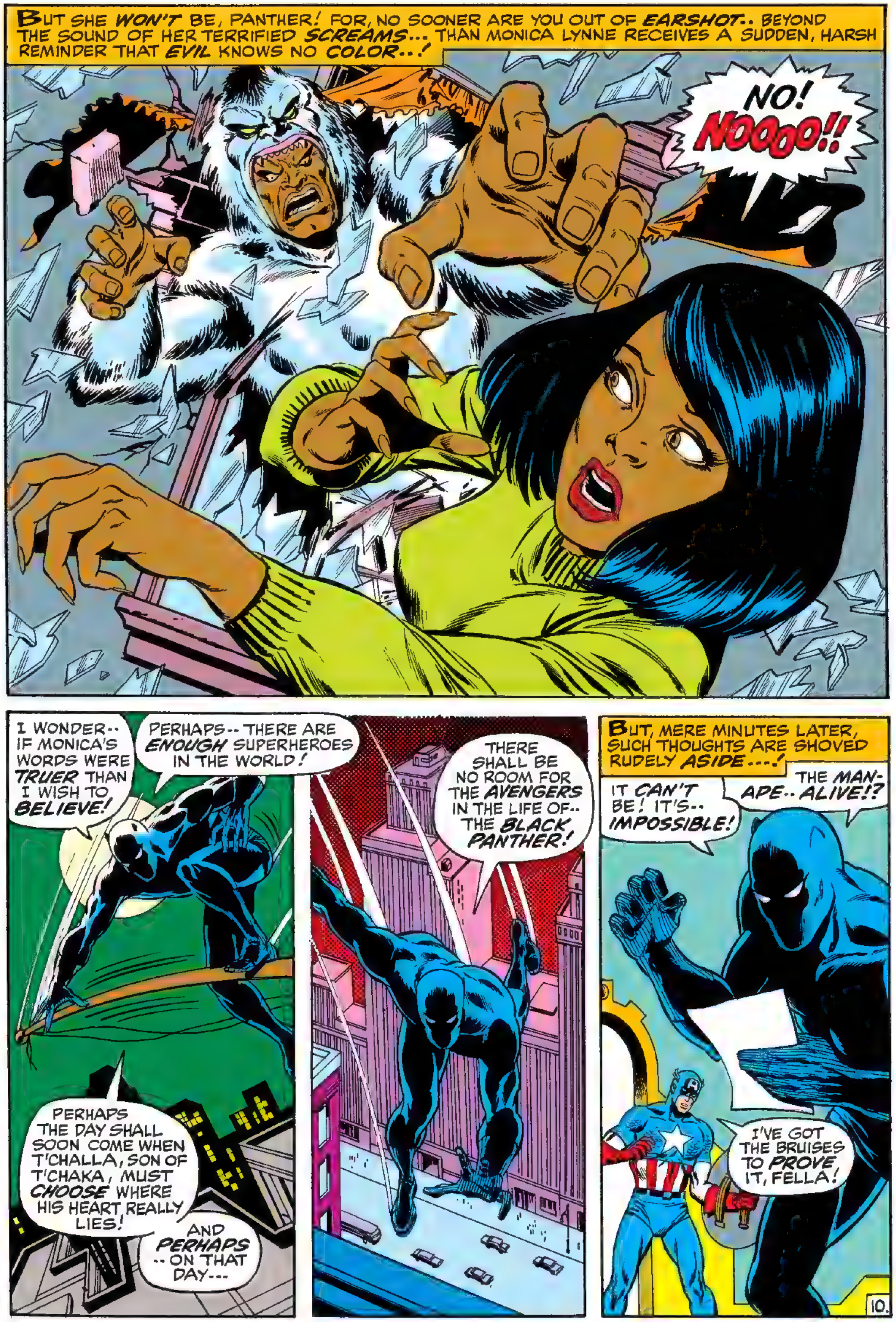

GOT YOU, CAP!
NOW, IF ONLY I CAN VIBRATE SWIFTLY ENOUGH -- WE BOTH HAVE A CHANCE!
IT'S WORKING! WE'VE BEEN SLOWED -- BY THE UPDRAFT!
BUT -- THE SIDE-WALK'S GETTING CLOSER...
CLOSER--!
THEN, ALL IN THE NEXT HEART-STOPPING MOMENT, THE TWO HURTLING AVENGERS END THEIR FALL -- AS A THIRD FIGURE APPEARS SEEMINGLY OUT OF NOWHERE BENEATH THEM, HIS STRONG ANDROID ARMS BRACED FOR THE SHATTERING IMPACT--!
VISION!
HE DID IT, CAP! THE VISION SAVED US BOTH!
HE MUST HAVE GONE THRU THE HARD STONE OF THE MANSION LIKE A GHOST -- EVEN FASTER THAN WE COULD FALL!
THEN HE BECAME SOLID ENOUGH -- IN TIME TO CATCH US BOTH!
YOUR WORDS ARE SUPERFLUOUS, PIETRO -- AND THEY WASTE TIME!
WE MUST RETURN ABOVE AT ONCE--- WHERE WANDA AND GOLIATH STILL FACE THE MURDEROUS MAN-APE!
KRRUNNCH!
5.

WHILE, A FEW STORIES ABOVE, BENEATH A SILVER MOON...
GOLIATH! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
I CAN'T AIM A HEX SPHERE AT THE MAN-APE-- WITHOUT RISKING HITTING YOU AS WELL!
HEX SPHERE? WHAT FOOLERY DO YOU SPEAK, FEMALE?
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, GRUESOME!
ANY OTHER TIME, I'D TAKE A BEATIN' BEFORE I'D PULL THE OLD RABBIT PUNCH BIT!
BUT IT AIN'T ME I'M WORRIED ABOUT-- IT'S MY BUDDIES, SO--!
PTOK!
AARRHHH!
THE GIANT ONE HAS FELLED M'BAKU!
NO! MY CHIEF MUST NOT FALL INTO THE HANDS OF HIS ENEMIES!
N'GAMO MUST HELP-- AND N'GAMO CAN HELP--!
THWANG!
YEEEOW!
WELL DONE, FAITHFUL N'GAMO!
AND NOW, I SHALL FINISH WHAT THE METAL GRAPPLE BEGAN!
BKOW!
6

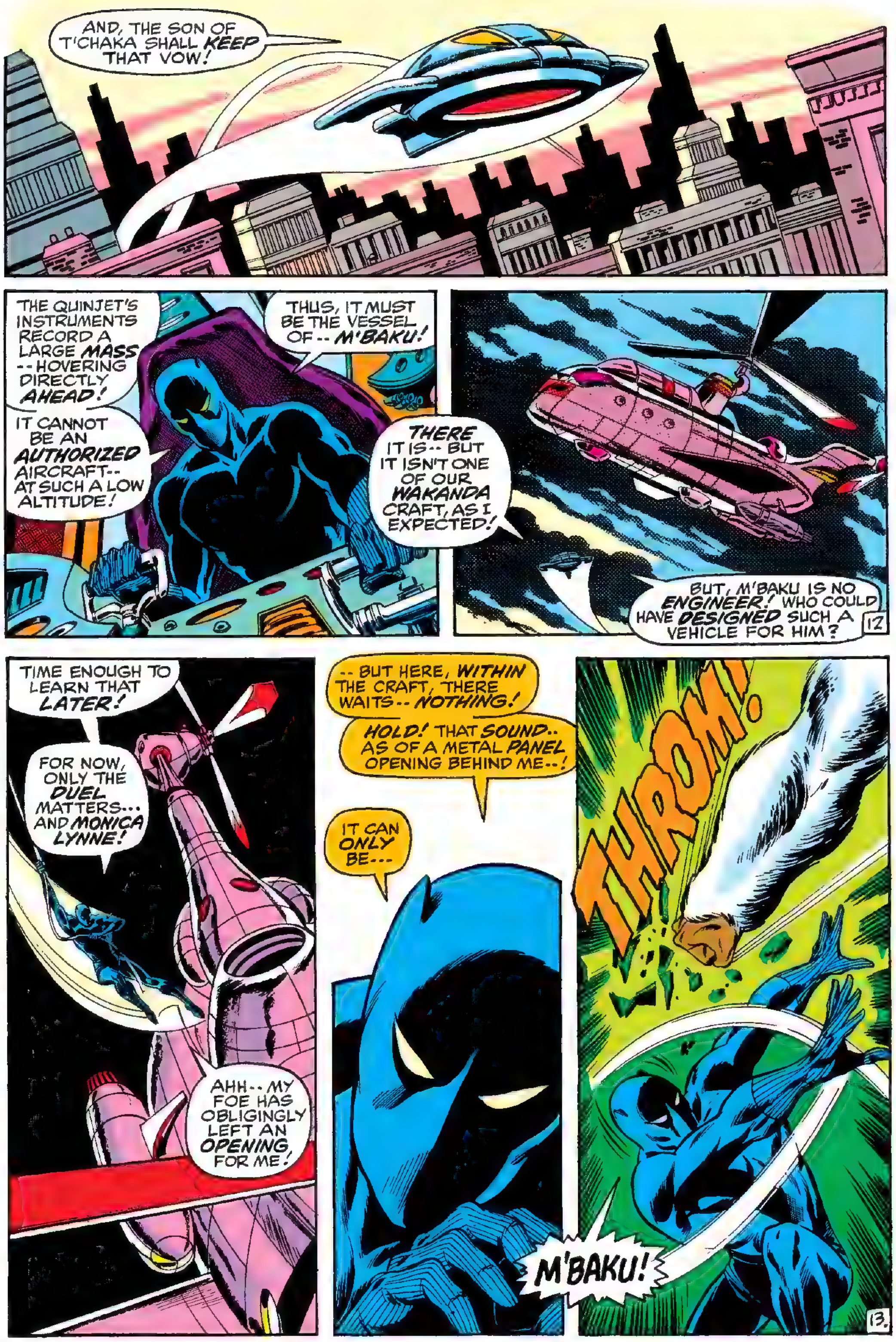
BAH! THE OTHERS ARE RETURNING!
THERE ARE TOO MANY FOR EVEN THE MAN-APE TO FACE ALONE!
BUT I SHALL RETURN--AND CONQUER--AT AN HOUR OF MY OWN CHOOSING!
THEN, AS THE JET-PROPELLED 'COPTER IS LOST IN DARKNESS AND DISTANCE---
SHEESH! THAT GORILLA-GUY PACKS A WALLOP!
I'D LIKE TO TACKLE 'IM AGAIN.. JUST THE TWO OF US!
YOU'LL HAVE TO STAND IN LINE, FELLA!
COME! LET US CONTINUE OUR TALK INSIDE!
THUS, BEFORE LONG, WITHIN THE GADGET-LADEN WALLS OF THE AVENGERS' PARK AVENUE DOMICILE--
--AND THAT BRINGS YOU UP TO DATE ON M'BAKU THE MAN-APE, CAP!
BIG MUSCLES, ALL RIGHT-- BUT JUST SMALL-POTATOES, AS SUPER-BADDIES GO!
LAST TIME OUT, HE ENDED UP MAKIN' A STATUE FALL ON HIMSELF!*
STRANGE-- HE'S FROM THE PANTHER'S AFRICAN HOME-LAND-- KNOWS YOU AND THE VISION AS WELL---
--YET HE PICKS ME AS THE TARGET FOR HIS REVENGE! WHY?
*AS SOMEWHAT MORE DRAMATICALLY DEPICTED IN ISSUE #62! --SMILEY
WHO SAYS HE PICKED YOU AT ALL, WINGHEAD?
HE PROBABLY JUST HAD US STAKED OUT.. AND CLOBBERED THE FIRST GUY WHO SHOWED!
"MOST LIKELY, IT WAS THE PANTHER HE WAS AFTER--"
"--TO FINISH THAT FIGHT THEY STARTED IN THE BELLY OF A NUCLEAR FURNACE!"
7

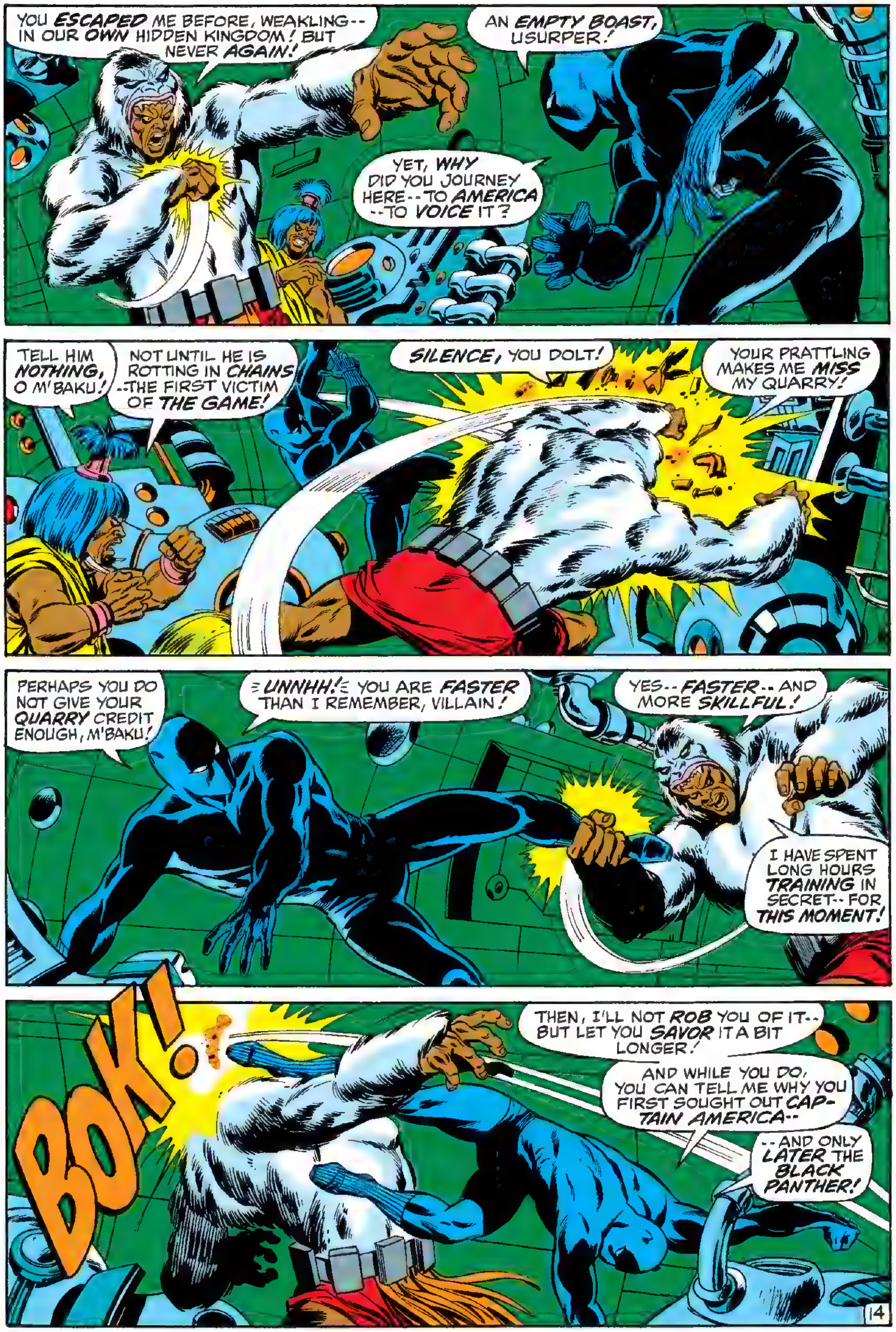
NOT LIKELY, BIG MAN--- CONSIDERING THIS FORGED NOTE I GOT THRU SHIELD!
M'BAKU WAS AFTER ME, ALL RIGHT-- AN AVENGER HE'D NEVER EVEN SEEN BEFORE!
PERHAPS WE SHALL LEARN HIS REASON, STEVE ROGERS..
Cap, Report to Headquarters! Urgent! T'Challa
-- WHEN THE BLACK PANTHER RETURNS FROM HIS NIGHTLY ROUNDS!
I WAS SORT'A COUNTING ON THAT, ANDROID!
MAYBE THE MAN-APE HAD ONLY ONE ENEMY BEFORE TONIGHT-- BUT NOW HE'S GOT ANOTHER ONE---
AND HIS INITIALS ARE--- CAPTAIN AMERICA!!
COME WITH US NOW, ONE AND ALL, FOR A SHORT RIDE ON THE UPTOWN SUBWAY-- JUST AN EXPRESS STOP OR TWO AWAY IN TIME.. YET IN OTHER WAYS, A WORLD DISTANT--!
BILLIARDS
COME WITH US TO NEW YORK'S HARLEM, DOWN WHOSE MEAN STREETS BLOW LAST WEEK'S NEWSPAPERS AND YESTERDAY'S DREAMS--!
BUT, EVEN HERE, THERE ARE SOME WHO DWELL LESS ON YESTERDAY'S DREAMS-- THAN ON TOMORROW'S PROMISE--
--AND WHO TAKE IT HARD WHEN THAT PROMISE SEEMS BROKEN--!
HOW COULD THEY DO IT? HOW?
THEY HAD THE CHANCE-- PERHAPS THEIR LAST CHANCE-- TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ILLS THAT BESET THIS COUNTRY--
BUGLE
OVERTY BILL DEFEATED!
--AND THEY LET IT SLIDE THRU THEIR FINGERS-- LIKE RANCID BUTTER!
DON'T THEY KNOW IT WAS NOT ONLY OUR SALVATION--- BUT THEIRS!
8

WHILE, ON THE MOONLIT ROOF ABOVE, A BLACK-CLAD FIGURE HEARS THE WORDS OF THE LOVELY SOCIAL WORKER...
--AND WISHES THAT HIS HEART, HIS LIPS, HELD THE ANSWER SHE SEEKS--!
HELLO, MONICA! MAY I COME IN?
T'CHALLA!
I THOUGHT.. I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!*
*MONICA LYNNE MET THE PANTHER IN ISSUE #73! -- STAN
WHAT? THAT I'D FORGET THE GIRL WHO HELPED ME AGAINST THE SONS OF THE SERPENTS?
THE GIRL WHO GAVE UP A SING-ING CAREER-- TO HELP HER PEOPLE?
AND WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN UP, T'CHALLA?
WHILE CHILDREN GO HUNGRY, YOU STAY A HIGH-AND-MIGHTY AVENGER!
THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SERVE A CAUSE, MONICA!
MINE IS TO TEACH SCHOOL-- NOT A DOZEN BLOCKS FROM HERE!
WELL, THREE CHEERS FOR YOU!! YOU TOSS US A CRUMB---
--WHILE YOU PAL AROUND WITH ONES WHO HOLD US DOWN-- WHO'D MAKE SLAVES OF US ALL OVER AGAIN!
YOU'RE TIRED! YOU DON'T MEAN THAT!
JUSTICE NEVER HAD A BETTER FRIEND THAN THE AVENGERS!
OH, I-- I KNOW, T'CHALLA-- I KNOW!
IT'S JUST THAT-- IT GETS SO HARD SOMETIMES--JUST TO KEEP GOING!
BUT YOU DO KEEP GOING, GIRL-- THAT'S YOUR STRENGTH!
STILL, PERHAPS I SHOULD DO MORE-- MUST DO MORE--!
NO! I WAS UNFAIR-- I SPOKE IN ANGER!
ALL THE SAME, I WANT TO TALK SOME MORE WITH YOU!
AND I SHALL--AS SOON AS I'VE REPORTED IN TO THE AVENGERS!
THEN-- HURRY BACK!
I'LL BE HERE-- WAITING--!
9.


BUT SHE WON'T BE, PANTHER! FOR, NO SOONER ARE YOU OUT OF EARSHOT.. BEYOND THE SOUND OF HER TERRIFIED SCREAMS... THAN MONICA LYNNE RECEIVES A SUDDEN, HARSH REMINDER THAT EVIL KNOWS NO COLOR..!
NO! NOOOO!!
I WONDER.. IF MONICA'S WORDS WERE TRUER THAN I WISH TO BELIEVE!
PERHAPS-- THERE ARE ENOUGH SUPERHEROES IN THE WORLD!
PERHAPS THE DAY SHALL SOON COME WHEN T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA, MUST CHOOSE WHERE HIS HEART REALLY LIES!
AND PERHAPS --ON THAT DAY---
THERE SHALL BE NO ROOM FOR THE AVENGERS IN THE LIFE OF.. THE BLACK PANTHER!
BUT, MERE MINUTES LATER, SUCH THOUGHTS ARE SHOVED RUDELY ASIDE ...!
IT CAN'T BE! IT'S.. IMPOSSIBLE!
THE MAN-APE.. ALIVE!?
I'VE GOT THE BRUISES TO PROVE IT, FELLA!
10.

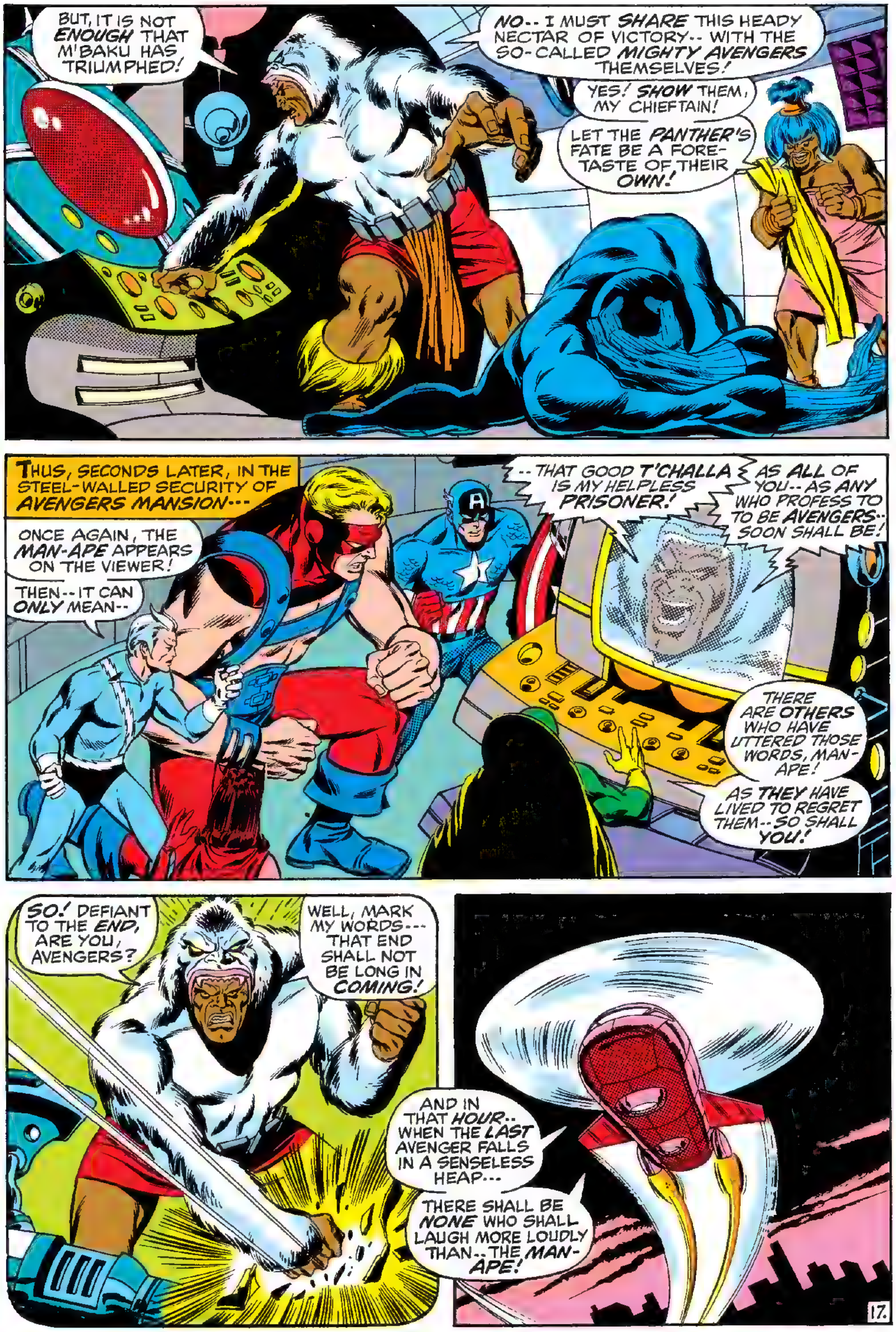
THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER!
N'GAMA-- THE DWARFISH HENCHMAN WHO CARRIED M'BAKU'S BODY AWAY--- MUST HAVE KNOWN OF SECRET HERBS WHICH---
WAIT, PANTHER!
A FACE-- APPEARING ON OUR MONITOR--!
NOT JUST ANY FACE, YOU INSOLENT YOUNG JACKAL-- BUT THE FACE OF DOOM-- FOR ALL AVENGERS!
BUT FIRST, I CHOOSE TO BATTLE TO THE DEATH ONLY WITH-- THE BLACK PANTHER!
AND, IF HE SHOWS ANY RELUCTANCE TO MEET ME IN THE DARK SKIES ABOVE, I THINK I NEED DO NO MORE---
--THAN SHOW ONE FLEETING GLIMPSE OF-- MY LOVELY AND HONORED GUEST!
MONICA! YOU MURDERING DEVIL-- YOU'VE CAPTURED HER-- TO STRIKE AT ME!
BUT, YOU KNOW YOUR MAN WELL-- FOR I SHALL MEET YOU ON YOUR TERMS-- FOR WHATEVER MAD REASON YOU DESIRE!
DON'T GO RUSHING OFF HALF-COCKED, PANTHER!
CAP IS RIGHT, T'CHALLA! IT CAN BE NOTHING BUT A TRAP!
YEAH! LEMME GO WITH YOU-- SO I CAN TAKE ANOTHER CRACK AT THAT BUSH-LEAGUE TARZAN!
NO, MY FRIENDS!
THE BLACK PANTHER HAS GIVEN HIS WORD!
EVEN TO SUCH AS THE MAN-APE-- THE VOW OF A WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN IS HIS SACRED BOND!
11

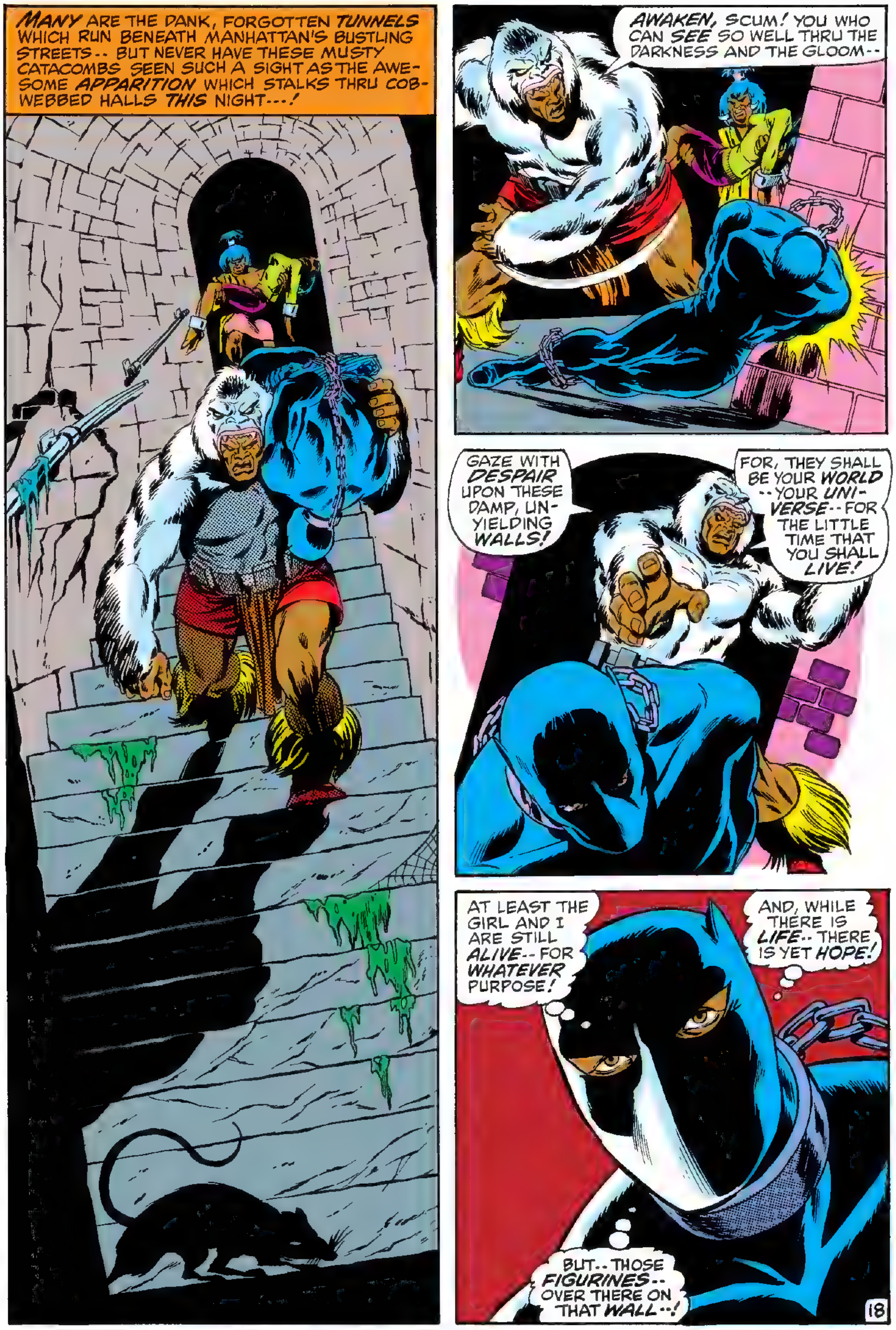

AND, THE SON OF T'CHAKA SHALL KEEP THAT VOW!
THE QUINJET'S INSTRUMENTS RECORD A LARGE MASS --HOVERING DIRECTLY AHEAD!
THUS, IT MUST BE THE VESSEL OF -- M'BAKU!
IT CANNOT BE AN AUTHORIZED AIRCRAFT-- AT SUCH A LOW ALTITUDE!
THERE IT IS-- BUT IT ISN'T ONE OF OUR WAKANDA CRAFT, AS I EXPECTED!
BUT, M'BAKU IS NO ENGINEER! WHO COULD HAVE DESIGNED SUCH A VEHICLE FOR HIM?
12
TIME ENOUGH TO LEARN THAT LATER!
FOR NOW, ONLY THE DUEL MATTERS... AND MONICA LYNNE!
AHH-- MY FOE HAS OBLIGINGLY LEFT AN OPENING FOR ME!
-- BUT HERE, WITHIN THE CRAFT, THERE WAITS-- NOTHING!
HOLD! THAT SOUND.. AS OF A METAL PANEL OPENING BEHIND ME--!
IT CAN ONLY BE---
THROM!
M'BAKU!
13


YOU ESCAPED ME BEFORE, WEAKLING-- IN OUR OWN HIDDEN KINGDOM! BUT NEVER AGAIN!
AN EMPTY BOAST, USURPER!
YET, WHY DID YOU JOURNEY HERE--TO AMERICA --TO VOICE IT?
TELL HIM NOTHING, O M'BAKU!
NOT UNTIL HE IS ROTTING IN CHAINS --THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE GAME!
SILENCE, YOU DOLT!
YOUR PRATTLING MAKES ME MISS MY QUARRY!
PERHAPS YOU DO NOT GIVE YOUR QUARRY CREDIT ENOUGH, M'BAKU!
UNNHH! YOU ARE FASTER THAN I REMEMBER, VILLAIN!
YES--FASTER--AND MORE SKILLFUL!
I HAVE SPENT LONG HOURS TRAINING IN SECRET--FOR THIS MOMENT!
BOK!
THEN, I'LL NOT ROB YOU OF IT--BUT LET YOU SAVOR IT A BIT LONGER!
AND WHILE YOU DO, YOU CAN TELL ME WHY YOU FIRST SOUGHT OUT CAPTAIN AMERICA--
--AND ONLY LATER THE BLACK PANTHER!
14

YOU MAY DEMAND ANSWERS OF M'BAKU, FOOL--
--WHEN THE SLINKING PANTHER POSSESSES THE STRENGTH OF THE SACRED WHITE GORILLA!
HE IS DOWN, GREAT MASTER-- AND THIS MACE SHALL END HIS STRUGGLES!
N'GAMO-- BEHIND ME-- WITH A WEAPON!
MUST ACT-- WITH THE SPEED OF THE CHEETAH-- OR--
MASTER-- HELP ME! HELP ME!
IT IS-- BEYOND BELIEF!
PERHAPS YOUR MASTER CANNOT HEAR YOU CLEARLY, N'GAMO!
IT MAY BE THAT HE SHALL HEAR YOU BETTER...
-- WHEN TWO OF YOU ARE-- FACE TO FACE!
KLONK!
15

MY PLOY HAS GIVEN ME BUT A MOMENT'S RESPITE!
--AND PERHAPS-- TIME TO FIND THE ONE HE HOLDS CAPTIVE!
PERHAPS-- THRU THAT HEAVY METAL DOOR--!
MONICA! MONICA LYNNE!
WTANG!
THEN, MOMENTARILY THROWING CAUTION TO THE WIND, THE PANTHER RUSHES TO THE UN-MOVING FORM, ONLY TO FIND--
IT'S NOTHING BUT-- A MANNEQUIN!
BUT--WHY WOULD M'BAKU PLACE IT HERE --UN-LESS--?
TOO LATE, T'CHALLA! TOO LATE DOES YOUR NIMBLE MIND SEE THE GRIM JEST PLAYED BY THE VENGEFUL MAN-APE! FOR, THE FOLLOW-ING INSTANT, THE DEADLY DOLL EXPLODES---
WROOOM!
--SHATTERS INTO A MILLION TINY, TWISTED FRAGMENTS-- WITH A SHOCK-WAVE FORCE THAT SENDS YOU HURTLING HEEL OVER HEAD INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS--!
HE HAS FALLEN-- AND HE WILL NOT SOON RISE AGAIN!
THEN, THE FIRST ROUND--THE OPEN-ING BATTLE--IS MINE!
16


BUT, IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT M'BAKU HAS TRIUMPHED!
NO-- I MUST SHARE THIS HEADY NECTAR OF VICTORY-- WITH THE SO-CALLED MIGHTY AVENGERS THEMSELVES!
YES! SHOW THEM, MY CHIEFTAIN!
LET THE PANTHER'S FATE BE A FORE-TASTE OF THEIR OWN!
THUS, SECONDS LATER, IN THE STEEL-WALLED SECURITY OF AVENGERS MANSION---
ONCE AGAIN, THE MAN-APE APPEARS ON THE VIEWER!
THEN--IT CAN ONLY MEAN--
--THAT GOOD T'CHALLA IS MY HELPLESS PRISONER!
AS ALL OF YOU--AS ANY WHO PROFESS TO TO BE AVENGERS--SOON SHALL BE!
THERE ARE OTHERS WHO HAVE UTTERED THOSE WORDS, MAN-APE!
AS THEY HAVE LIVED TO REGRET THEM--SO SHALL YOU!
SO! DEFIANT TO THE END, ARE YOU, AVENGERS?
WELL, MARK MY WORDS--- THAT END SHALL NOT BE LONG IN COMING!
AND IN THAT HOUR--WHEN THE LAST AVENGER FALLS IN A SENSELESS HEAP---
THERE SHALL BE NONE WHO SHALL LAUGH MORE LOUDLY THAN--THE MAN-APE!
17.


MANY ARE THE DANK, FORGOTTEN TUNNELS WHICH RUN BENEATH MANHATTAN'S BUSTLING STREETS-- BUT NEVER HAVE THESE MUSTY CATACOMBS SEEN SUCH A SIGHT AS THE AWESOME APPARITION WHICH STALKS THRU COBWEBBED HALLS THIS NIGHT---!
AWAKEN, SCUM! YOU WHO CAN SEE SO WELL THRU THE DARKNESS AND THE GLOOM--
GAZE WITH DESPAIR UPON THESE DAMP, UNYIELDING WALLS!
FOR, THEY SHALL BE YOUR WORLD --YOUR UNIVERSE--FOR THE LITTLE TIME THAT YOU SHALL LIVE!
AT LEAST THE GIRL AND I ARE STILL ALIVE--FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE!
AND, WHILE THERE IS LIFE..THERE IS YET HOPE!
BUT..THOSE FIGURINES-- OVER THERE ON THAT WALL--!
18

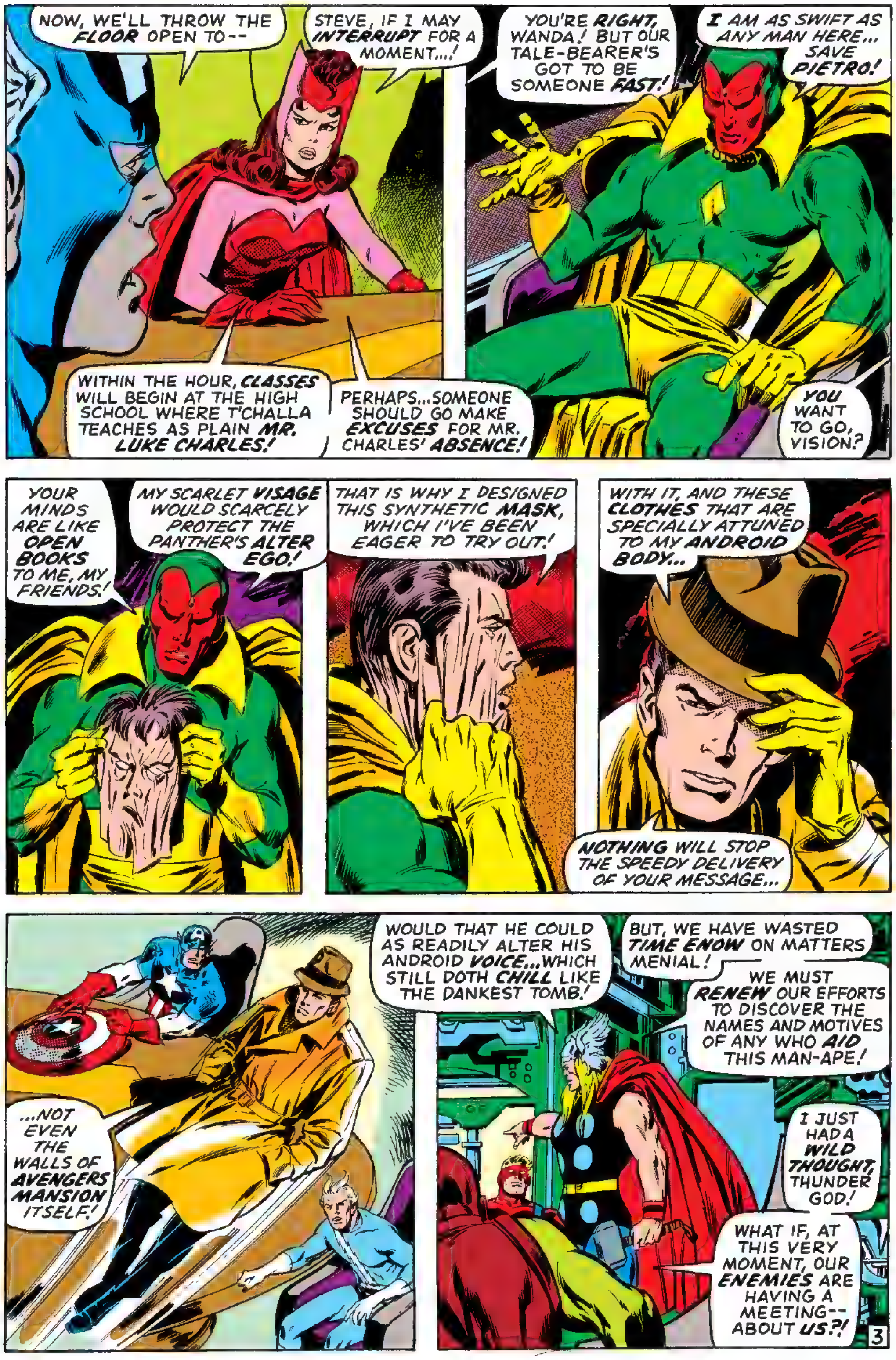
SO, YOU LIKE OUR LITTLE STATUETTES, DO YOU?
THEN, PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO EXPLAIN OUR LITTLE GAME TO YOU-- SINCE YOU'LL TELL NO ONE ABOUT IT!
PERHAPS THEN YOU WILL SEE WHY I ATTACKED CAPTAIN AMERICA-- ONE WHO WAS IGNORANT OF MY POWERS AND THEREFORE AT A DISADVANTAGE--
--WHEN MY TRUE QUARREL IS WITH YOU ALONE!
BUT FIRST, THERE IS SOMETHING I MUST SAY-- AND DO!
HEAR ME, YOU OTHERS-- YOU WHOSE LOATHING FOR THE AVENGERS FAR EXCEEDS MY OWN!
IT IS STILL I-- M'BAKU-- WHO HAVE DRAWN FIRST BLOOD!
FOR, I CLAIM-- THE BLACK PANTHER!
A TOUCHING CEREMONY, M'BAKU! BUT, FOR WHOSE BENEFIT--?
DO YOU, T'CHALLA?
WAIT! OTHERS HAVE ENTERED THE CHAMBER-- I CAN SEE THEM NOW!
AND NOW-- AT LAST-- I UNDERSTAND YOUR GRISLY GAME!
THEN, LET THE SOUND OF THEIR VOICES BE THE BELL-TOLLING OF DEATH-- FOR THE AVENGERS!
19

YOU'VE NEVER LAID EYES ON ME BEFORE, CAT-MAN-- BUT YOU'RE AN AVENGER, SO YOU'VE GOT TO DIE!
I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD OF ME! THEY CALL ME THE LIVING LASER!
AND I'M-- POWER MAN!
SURELY YOU NEED NO INTRODUCTION TO-- THE SWORDSMAN!
NOT TO THE ONE WHO CALLED THESE OTHERS TOGETHER-- THE GRIM REAPER!!
THESE, PANTHER, ARE THE DEADLY PLAYERS --AND YOU ARE THE FIRST PAWN TO FALL IN MY MACABRE GAME---
--THE FINAL OBJECT OF WHICH IS-- THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!
AND YES-- WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES A NAME WHICH BEFITS OUR LOFTY PURPOSE!
WE ARE-- THE LETHAL LEGION!
CONCLUDED--NEXT ISSUE
20.

AVENGERS
15¢
79
AUG
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
DIE, YOU FOOLS! NO MAN ESCAPES THE GRIM REAPER!
POWER MAN! SWORDSMAN! LIVING LASER! MAN-APE!
LO! THE LETHAL LEGION!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
LO! THE LETHAL LEGION!
HAIL, AVENGERS!
WHEREFORE HAVE THOR AND IRON MAN BEEN SUMMONED INTO THY MIDST?
FROM THE GLUM LOOKS ON THEIR FACES, THUNDER GOD, I'D SAY THAT SOMETHING BIG IS UP!
EITHER THE EARTH'S BEEN INVADED... OR SPIRO AGNEW JUST MADE ANOTHER SPEECH!
YOU WON'T FEEL LIKE MAKIN' WITH THE MIRTH, SHELLHEAD, AFTER YA HEAR WHAT WE GOT TO TELL YA!
STAN LEE • ROY THOMAS • JOHN BUSCEMA
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST
TOM PALMER, EMBELLISHER ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER

NO NEED TO GET ON YOUR HIGH HORSE, BIG FELLA!
AY, GOLIATH! FOR, HAVE YE NOT CALLED... AND HAVE WE NOT ANSWERED?
RIGHT! THIS IS NO TIME TO QUARREL AMONGST OURSELVES!
TOGETHER, WE MAY HOPE TO STAND! BUT DIVIDED... WE MUST CERTAINLY FALL!
FALL? TO WHOM, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
YOU'LL NOTICE THAT ONE OF US IS MISS-ING THIS FINE MORN-ING, THOR!
THAT ONE IS OUR AFRICAN AVENGER... T'CHALLA, THE BLACK PANTHER!*
*SINCE LAST ISSUE!--STAN.
"IN THE DARKEST PART OF LAST NIGHT, T'CHALLA WAS CAPTURED... BY A FELLOW TRIBESMAN CALLED M'BAKU THE MAN-APE...!
"MAYBE THAT ATTACK SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED... SINCE M'BAKU ONCE VIED WITH T'CHALLA FOR HIS THRONE!
"BUT, WHAT'S AMAZING IS THAT THE FIRST AVENGER THE MAN-APE TRIED TO CAPTURE WAS ME... WHOM HE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE!"
THIS, PLUS OTHER FACTORS, MAKES US SUSPECT THAT WE'RE FACING MORE THAN THE SIMPLE PLOT OF A VENGEFUL RIVAL!
THEN WHY IN BLAZES ARE WE RAPPIN' LIKE A HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE SQUAD... INSTEAD'A COMBIN' THE CITY FOR THE PANTHER?
BELIEVE IT, WINGHEAD!
EASY, AVENGER!
ONLY A FOOL-HARDY MAN RUSHES HEADLONG INTO BATTLE... BEFORE HE KNOWS WHO HIS ENEMIES ARE!
WELL PUT, PIETRO!
2



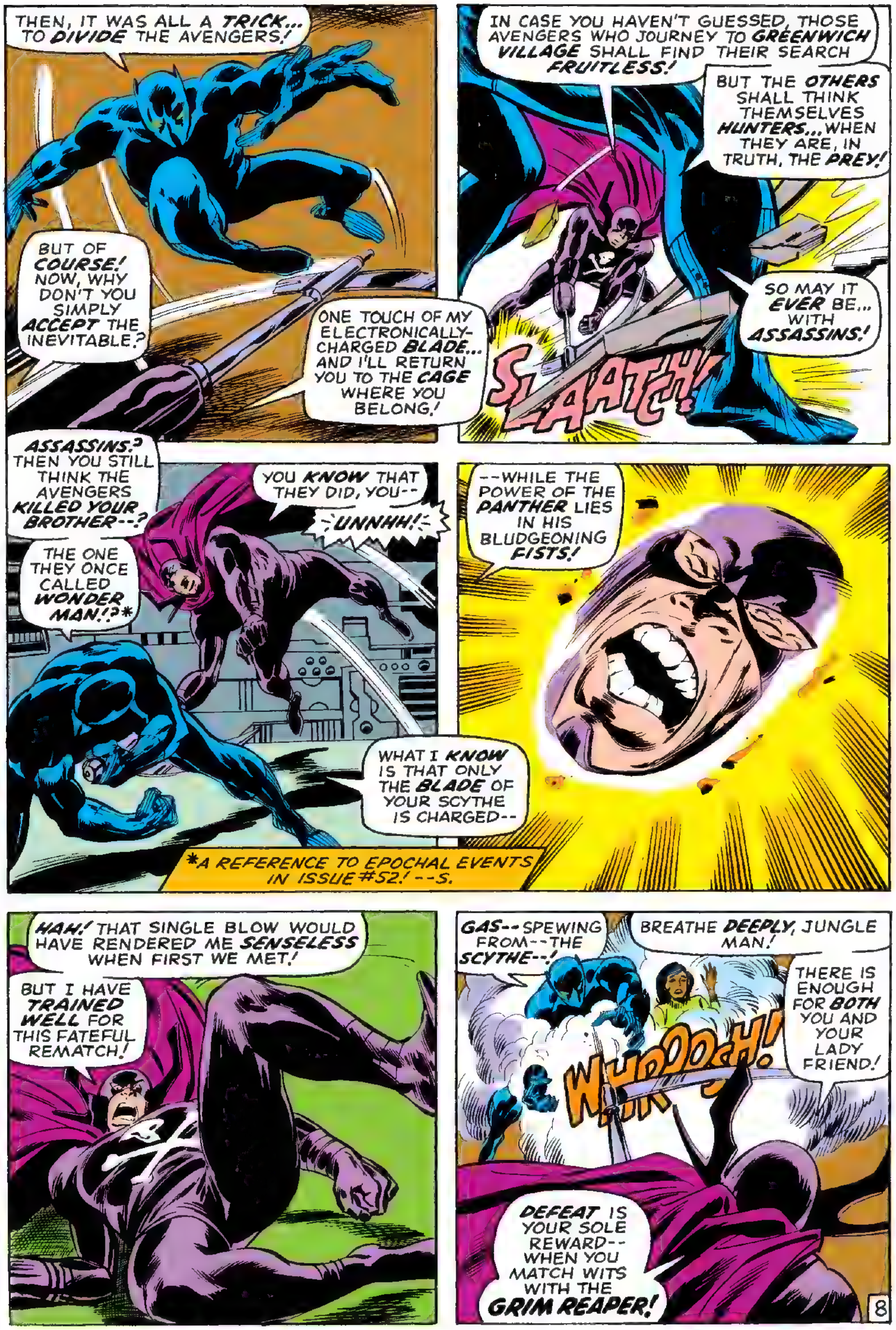
NOW, WE'LL THROW THE FLOOR OPEN TO--
STEVE, IF I MAY INTERRUPT FOR A MOMENT...!
WITHIN THE HOUR, CLASSES WILL BEGIN AT THE HIGH SCHOOL WHERE T'CHALLA TEACHES AS PLAIN MR. LUKE CHARLES!
PERHAPS...SOMEONE SHOULD GO MAKE EXCUSES FOR MR. CHARLES' ABSENCE!
YOU'RE RIGHT, WANDA! BUT OUR TALE-BEARER'S GOT TO BE SOMEONE FAST!
I AM AS SWIFT AS ANY MAN HERE... SAVE PIETRO!
YOU WANT TO GO, VISION?
YOUR MINDS ARE LIKE OPEN BOOKS TO ME, MY FRIENDS!
MY SCARLET VISAGE WOULD SCARCELY PROTECT THE PANTHER'S ALTER EGO!
THAT IS WHY I DESIGNED THIS SYNTHETIC MASK, WHICH I'VE BEEN EAGER TO TRY OUT!
WITH IT, AND THESE CLOTHES THAT ARE SPECIALLY ATTUNED TO MY ANDROID BODY...
NOTHING WILL STOP THE SPEEDY DELIVERY OF YOUR MESSAGE...
...NOT EVEN THE WALLS OF AVENGERS MANSION ITSELF!
WOULD THAT HE COULD AS READILY ALTER HIS ANDROID VOICE...WHICH STILL DOTH CHILL LIKE THE DANKEST TOMB!
BUT, WE HAVE WASTED TIME ENOW ON MATTERS MENIAL!
WE MUST RENEW OUR EFFORTS TO DISCOVER THE NAMES AND MOTIVES OF ANY WHO AID THIS MAN-APE!
I JUST HAD A WILD THOUGHT, THUNDER GOD!
WHAT IF, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, OUR ENEMIES ARE HAVING A MEETING--ABOUT US?!
3

NOT NEARLY SO WILD A THOUGHT AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, TONY STARK! FOR, EVEN AS YOU SPEAK... IN A SECRET CHAMBER ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE CITY...
HEY, GLORIOUS FOUNDER! LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!
YES! THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY AVENGERS AT LARGE!
SILENCE, YOU JIBBERING BUFFOONS! I INTEND TO SAVOR THIS MOMENT!
WHAT DO YOUR MAUDLIN MOUTHINGS MEAN TO THE GRIM REAPER?
YOU CAN LORD IT OVER THE OTHERS IF YOU WANT, REAPER... BUT DO NOT PLAY HIGH-AND-MIGHTY WITH THE SWORDSMAN!
WHAT? YOU DARE RAISE YOUR VOICE TO ME!?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT IT WAS I WHO FORGED YOU MALCONTENTS INTO--THE LETHAL LEGION?
WHAT WERE YOU BEFORE I CAME, BUT FOUR SPITEFUL FAILURES...GNASHING YOUR TEETH AND MUTTERING OF REVENGE ON THE SUPERHEROES WHO HAD DEFEATED YOU?
IT WAS ONLY I WHO WAS ABLE TO UNITE YOU-- I, WITH MY ALL-CONSUMING HATRED OF THE AVENGERS AND ALL THEY STAND FOR!
AND, AS THE FIRST FRUIT OF THAT UNION...MAY I DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FAR WALL?
YOU DON'T NEED TO IMPRESS US, REAPER!
4

AH, BUT I WANT TO, SWASH-BUCKLER!
BEHOLD THE BLACK PANTHER... AND THE LOVELY BAIT FOR THE TRAP THAT SNARED HIM!
THE FIRST VICTIM OF OUR SLIGHTLY SINISTER GAME!
DO NOT SEEK TO TAKE CREDIT FOR HIS CAPTURE, GRIM ONE!
HE IS THE MAN-APE'S PRIZE... EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE HELD ME BACK FROM SLAYING THE DOG!
IN DUE TIME, M'BAKU... IN DUE TIME!
IS IT NOT MORE FITTING THAT ALL THE AVENGERS PERISH... IN THE SELFSAME INSTANT?
"THE FAMILY THAT FLIES TOGETHER DIES TOGETHER", YOU MIGHT SAY!
FOR, THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE GAME WE PLAY... THE UTTER ANNIHILATION OF THE SO-CALLED MIGHTY AVENGERS!
THOR... YELLOW-JACKET... WE'LL DESTROY EVEN THE HULK BEFORE WE'VE FINISHED!
REMEMBER... HE WHO CAPTURES THE GREATEST NUMBER OF THEM GAINS THE RICHEST REWARD!
SKRUTCH!
THE PANTHER WAS THE FIRST TO FALL... BUT NOT THE LAST!
OUR FELINE GUEST DOESN'T CHOOSE TO COMMENT UPON MY LITTLE PREDICTION!
BUT, NO MATTER!
NOW, LEGIONNAIRES ...TO YOUR POSTS!
SWORDSMAN AND POWER MAN, TO THE WATER MAIN WHICH RUNS BENEATH THE AVENGERS' MANSION...
MAN-APE AND THE LIVING LASER, TO THE NEARBY POWER STATION!
YOU SURE LIKE GIVIN' ORDERS, DON'TCHA?
5

I WAS BORN TO GIVE ORDERS, FOOL!
WELL, IT'S TIME TO SHUT THE PANTHER AWAY ONCE MORE... UNTIL HIS COSTUMED COHORTS JOIN HIM!
I MUST BE OFF TO GREENWICH VILLAGE--FOR REASONS OF MY OWN!
YET, EVEN AS THE TWIN PANELS CLANG SHUT...
THE FORCE FIELD AROUND US... IT'S GONE!
THERE MUST BE A MOMENTARY POWER FAILURE!
WHAT DOES THAT MATTER ...WHILE WE'RE STILL STRAPPED DOWN?
YOU... DISAPPOINT ME... MONICA!
I THOUGHT YOU HAD A HIGHER OPINION OF...
GGRKKK
...THE PANTHER'S POWER!
YOU DID IT! WE'RE FREE!!
WAIT, T'CHALLA! WE CAN ESCAPE MORE EASILY OUT THE BACK...!
NO, GIRL!
NOT WHILE THERE IS A TV TRANS-MITTER IN THE NEXT ROOM!
AND NOT WHILE DEADLY SNARES ARE SET FOR MY FELLOW AVENGERS!
THESE PANELS OPEN... EVEN MORE EASILY THAN I HAD HOPED!
6

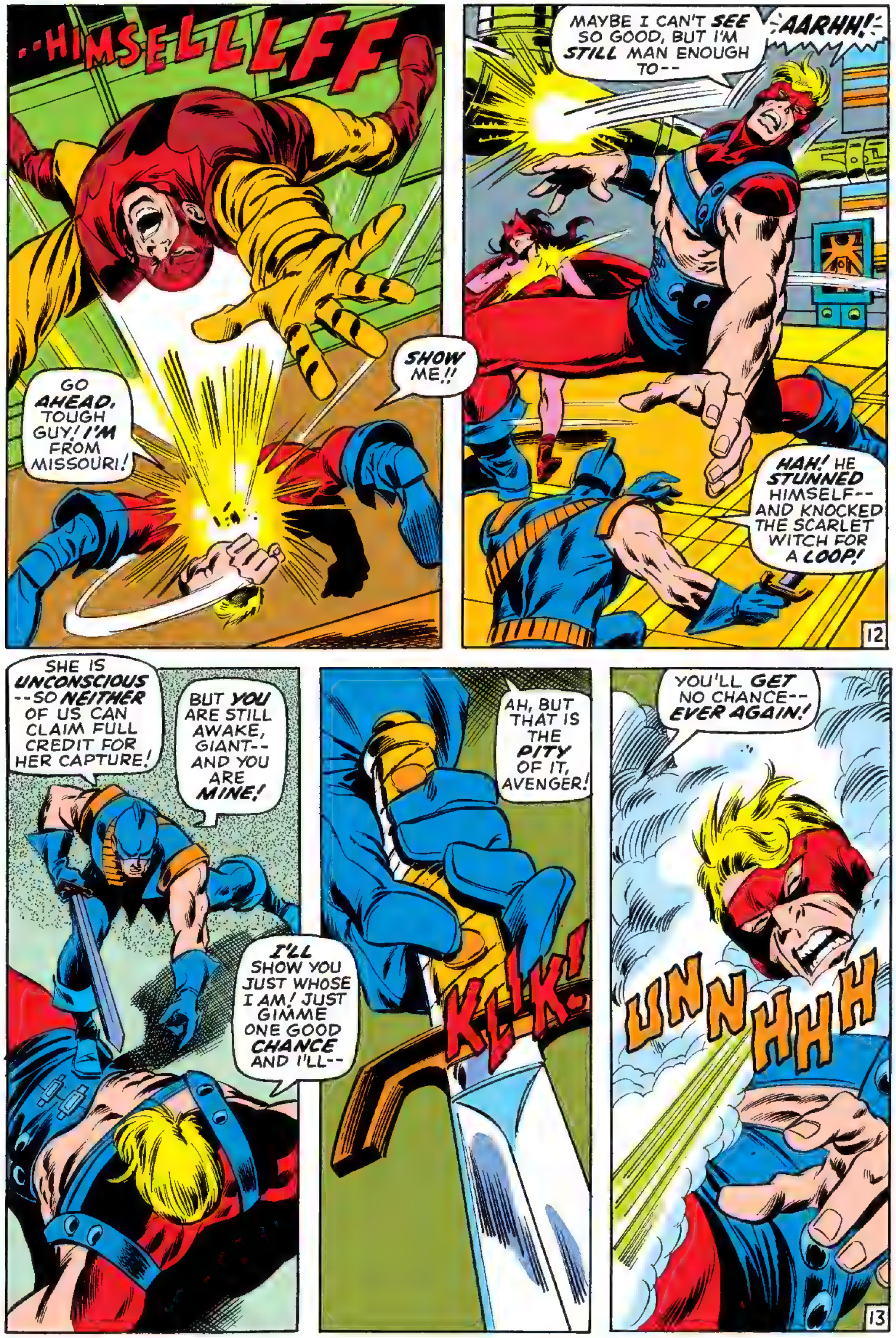
NOR WILL IT TAKE MUCH EFFORT TO ADJUST THIS CONVENIENT TRANSMITTER...TO A CERTAIN FREQUENCY!
AS MY FRIEND GOLIATH WOULD SAY... THINGS ARE BREAKING MY WAY!
THUS, PRECISELY THIRTY SECONDS LATER, IN THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF THE MIGHTIEST SUPER-GROUP OF ALL...
ATTENTION, AVENGERS! THIS IS THE PANTHER, WITH AN URGENT WARN-ING...PROMETHEUS PRIORITY...!
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN... LOOK THOU!
IT IS T'CHALLA... BUT HOW...?
QUICKLY, YET IN MEASURED TONES, THE AFRICAN AVENGER REPEATS WHAT HE HAS SEEN AND HEARD...!
THANKS, PARTNER! WE'LL BE READY FOR THAT... LETHAL LEGION!
STILL, HOW COME THEY'RE 'SKULKIN' ABOUT THOSE THREE SPOTS YOU MENTIONED?
I DO NOT KNOW! I MERELY--
HIS IMAGE-- AND HIS VOICE--HAVE FADED!
PERHAPS THE EVIL-DOERS' TRANSMITTER WAS LESS ADJUST-ABLE THAN T'CHALLA BELIEVED!
LET'S PRAY THAT'S IT! ANYWAY, THOR AND I ARE OFF FOR AN UNGUIDED TOUR OF GREENWICH VILLAGE!
I ONLY HOPE THE PANTHER IS HERE WHEN WE RETURN!
PERHAPS HE WILL, AVENGER...BUT JUST THIS MINUTE, WE'D MAKE BOOK AGAINST IT...!
THE GRIM REAPER! SO--YOU'VE RETURNED!
CRETIN! I NEVER TRULY LEFT!
NOW TELL ME...DO YOU BELIEVE IT WAS MERELY YOUR JUNGLE-SPAWNED PROWESS WHICH ENABLED YOU TO ESCAPE THIS FAR?
7


THEN, IT WAS ALL A TRICK... TO DIVIDE THE AVENGERS!
BUT OF COURSE! NOW, WHY DON'T YOU SIMPLY ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE?
ONE TOUCH OF MY ELECTRONICALLY-CHARGED BLADE... AND I'LL RETURN YOU TO THE CAGE WHERE YOU BELONG!
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T GUESSED, THOSE AVENGERS WHO JOURNEY TO GREENWICH VILLAGE SHALL FIND THEIR SEARCH FRUITLESS!
BUT THE OTHERS SHALL THINK THEMSELVES HUNTERS... WHEN THEY ARE, IN TRUTH, THE PREY!
SO MAY IT EVER BE... WITH ASSASSINS!
SLAATCH!
ASSASSINS? THEN YOU STILL THINK THE AVENGERS KILLED YOUR BROTHER--?
THE ONE THEY ONCE CALLED WONDER MAN!?*
YOU KNOW THAT THEY DID, YOU--
UNNHH!
WHAT I KNOW IS THAT ONLY THE BLADE OF YOUR SCYTHE IS CHARGED--
*A REFERENCE TO EPOCHAL EVENTS IN ISSUE #52! --S.
--WHILE THE POWER OF THE PANTHER LIES IN HIS BLUDGEONING FISTS!
HAH! THAT SINGLE BLOW WOULD HAVE RENDERED ME SENSELESS WHEN FIRST WE MET!
BUT I HAVE TRAINED WELL FOR THIS FATEFUL REMATCH!
GAS-- SPEWING FROM--THE SCYTHE--!
BREATHE DEEPLY, JUNGLE MAN!
THERE IS ENOUGH FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR LADY FRIEND!
WHOOOSH!
DEFEAT IS YOUR SOLE REWARD-- WHEN YOU MATCH WITS WITH THE GRIM REAPER!
8

MEANWHILE, SOME BLOCKS UPTOWN...
ANDREW JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL
SO THIS IS WHERE T'CHALLA-- LUKE CHARLES-- TEACHES!
IT IS HARDLY THE PLACE I WOULD HAVE CHOSEN FOR ONE WHO WAS A KING IN HIS NATIVE LAND!
STILL, WHO AM I TO SPEAK FOR ONE SUCH AS HE?
HE IS A HUMAN BEING... WHILE ONLY SYNTHETIC LIQUIDS PULSE THRU MY ARTIFICIAL VEINS...
...AND THE BRAIN PATTERNS OF ANOTHER'S MIND FORMED THE BASIS OF MY OWN!
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
MISS HOTCHKISS, I PRESUME?
WH-WHAT?
OH MY GRACIOUS-- YOU GAVE ME SUCH A START--!
WH- WHO ARE YOU?
I AM A FRIEND OF LUKE CHARLES!
I CAME TO TELL YOU THAT HE CANNOT BE HERE THIS MORNING!
HE HAS BEEN... UNAVOIDABLY DETAINED!
I-I SEE! WELL, I SUPPOSE... IT'S ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT CAN'T BE HELPED!
WILL HE BE HERE... TOMORROW?
I CANNOT SAY! I--TRULY HOPE THAT HE MAY!
WAS THERE... ANYTHING ELSE...?
NO...NO, THAT WAS ALL THAT I CAME TO SAY...!
STEADY, BESSIE! NOTHING TO GET... ALL FLUSTERED ABOUT!
BUT HIS VOICE WAS ICE-COLD...AND HIS FACE LOOKED LIKE SOME KIND OF RUBBER MASK!
WHY, OH WHY DID I WATCH "HOUSE OF WAX" ON TV LAST NIGHT?
9

ELSEWHERE, AT THAT VERY SECOND...
GOLIATH...WAIT FOR ME! YOU MIGHT NEED HELP!
IF I WANT A POWDER PUFF, LADY, I'LL SEND YOU A SMOKE SIGNAL!
YOU--HELP ME? THAT'S A LAUGH!
DON'T FORGET WHO'S THE MUSCLE ON THIS TEAM!
CLINT BARTON IS STILL BITTER ABOUT BEING JILTED BY THE BLACK WIDOW!
I'LL NOT ENRAGE HIM FURTHER...!
WELL, THAT WATER MAIN OUGHTTA BE RIGHT--
HEY! WHAT IN BLAZES--?
A LIGHT--AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL!
WELL, POWER MAN?
ARE THE TWO AVENGERS IN THE PROPER POSITION YET?
I'LL TELL YA WHEN, SWORDY!
AND THE TIME--
--TO INTENSIFY THAT LIGHT-BEAM--
--IS NOW!!
10

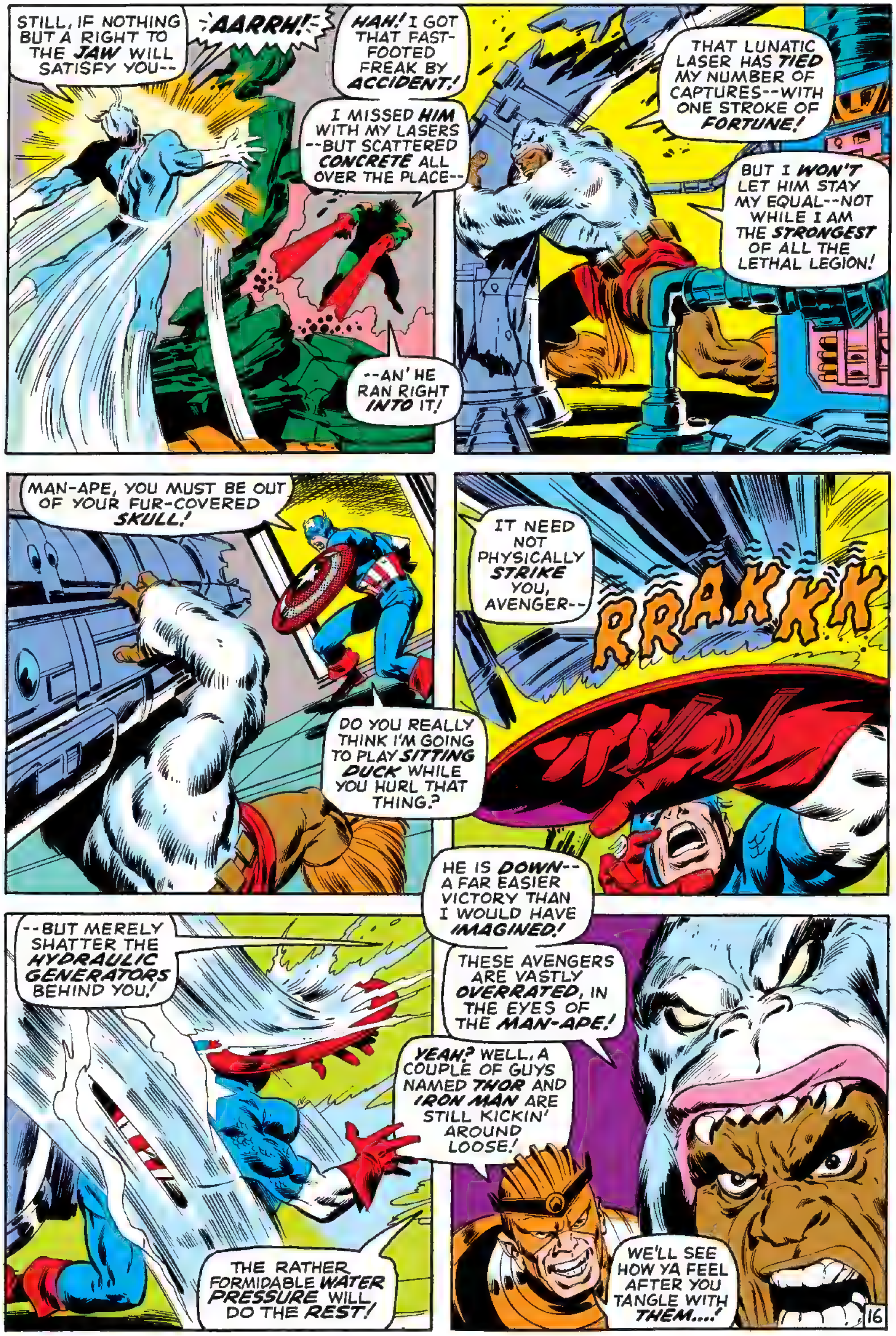
THEY ARE BLINDED-- LIKE BATS CAUGHT IN THE GLARE OF THE SUN!
BULL, MISTER! THEY MIGHT BE DAZZLED-- BUT THEY AIN'T DOWN YET!
BY RIGHTS, THAT SHOULD MAKE THEM BOTH MY CAPTIVES!
IT'LL STILL TAKE A HEAP OF MUSCLE TO TAKE OUT GOLIATH--
AND ANOTHER NAME FOR MUSCLE IS-- POWER MAN!
MMFFF!
BONK!
LET THAT FIST-SLAMMING FOOL BE THE ONE TO CAPTURE GOLIATH!
IN EARNING THE SUMS WHICH THE REAPER HAS PROMISED, ONE AVENGER COUNTS AS MUCH AS ANOTHER!
YOU SHOULD THANK ME, GIRL, FOR SAVING YOU FROM MY FRIEND'S LESS CULTURED CLUTCHES!
THE ONE THING I WILL THANK YOU FOR, FRIEND...
KRUMMBLL
...IS FOR LETTING ME HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR GLOATING VOICE...
...SO THAT I KNEW WHERE TO AIM MY HEX BOLT!
I...UNDERESTIMATED YOU, WOMAN! BUT, I WON'T DO SO A SECOND TIME!
EVEN TEMPORARILY BLINDED, YOU ARE STILL A FORMIDABLE FOE!
AW, CUT THE CORN, ERROL FLYNN!
I'VE SEEN AVON LADIES WHO GAVE YOU A HARD TIME!
NOW, SWORDY, WATCH HOW A REAL PRO HANDLES--
11



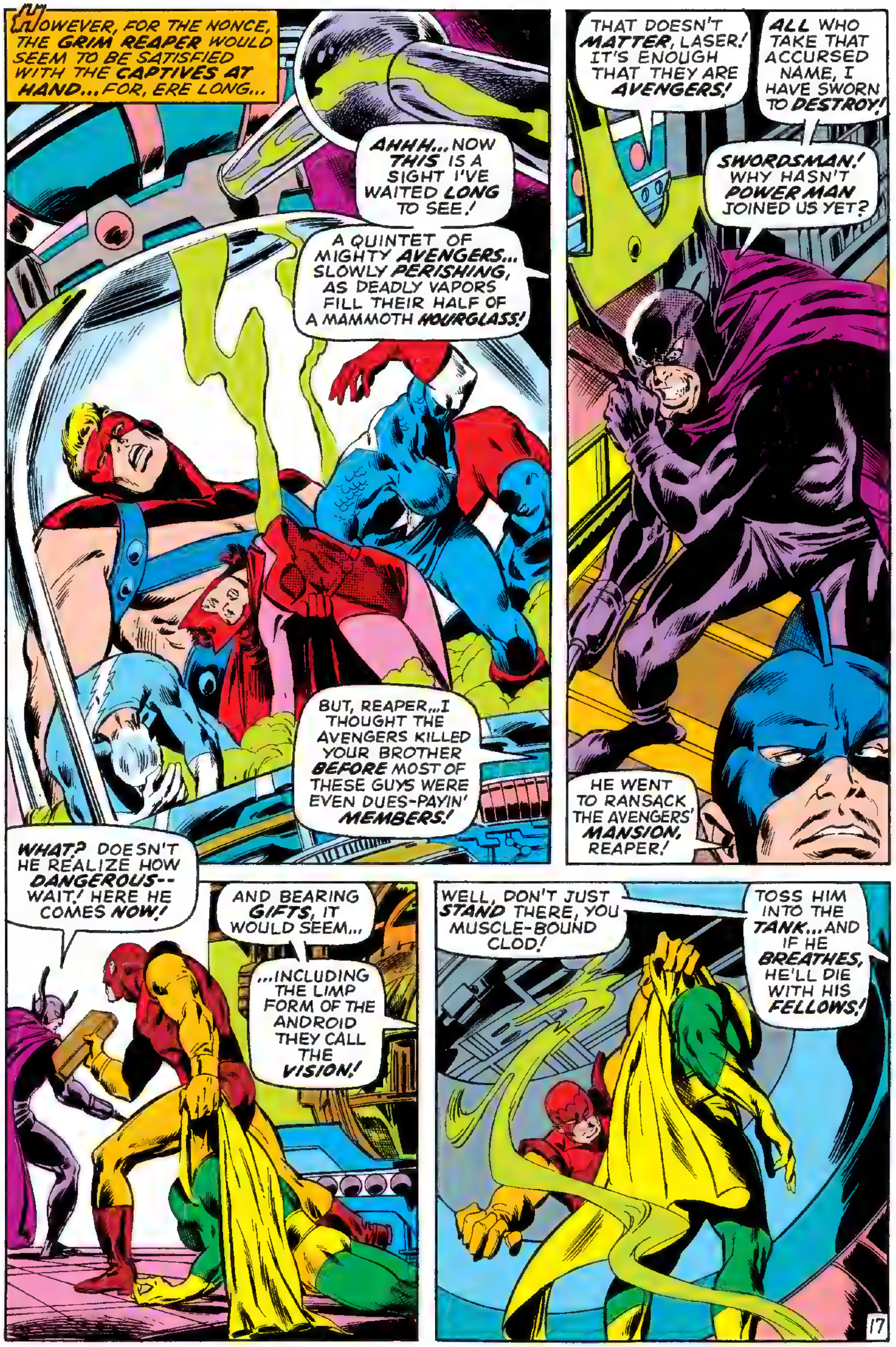
--HIMSELLLLFF
GO AHEAD, TOUGH GUY! I'M FROM MISSOURI!
SHOW ME!!
MAYBE I CAN'T SEE SO GOOD, BUT I'M STILL MAN ENOUGH TO--
AARHH!
HAH! HE STUNNED HIMSELF-- AND KNOCKED THE SCARLET WITCH FOR A LOOP!
12
SHE IS UNCONSCIOUS --SO NEITHER OF US CAN CLAIM FULL CREDIT FOR HER CAPTURE!
BUT YOU ARE STILL AWAKE, GIANT-- AND YOU ARE MINE!
I'LL SHOW YOU JUST WHOSE I AM! JUST GIMME ONE GOOD CHANCE AND I'LL--
AH, BUT THAT IS THE PITY OF IT, AVENGER!
KLIK!
YOU'LL GET NO CHANCE-- EVER AGAIN!
UNNHHH
13

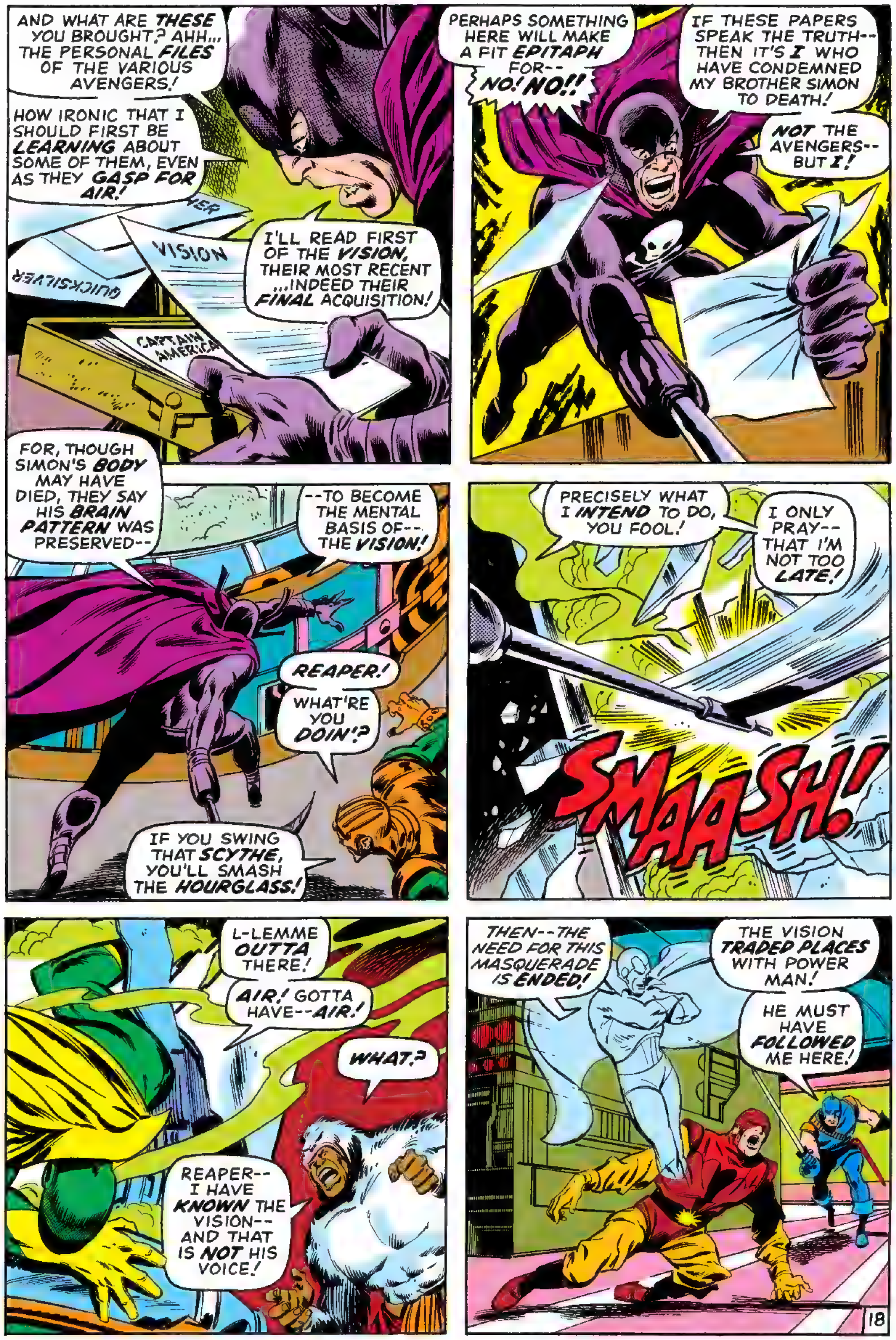
WHILE, AT THE POWER STATION WHICH NORMALLY SERVES AVENGERS MANSION...
CAP--DOESN'T ALL THIS SEEM TOO NEAT A PACKAGE TO YOU?
THAT T'CHALLA SHOULD MANAGE TO CALL US--THEN BE CUT OFF?
IF YOU MEAN DO I SMELL A RAT--RIGHT ON!
SO, KEEP THOSE MUTANT EYEBALLS PEELED F--
WHAT!?
THE STAIRWAY! IT'S TREMBLING--LIKE A PILE OF MATCH-STICKS!
AND--LOOK! THERE--AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS--!
THEY MIGHT AS WELL BE MADE OF FLIMSY WOOD, AVENGERS--WHEN THEY FACE THE STEEL-RENDING MIGHT OF--
--M'BAKU THE MAN-APE!
THRAAAAPP!
AND NOW, CAPTAIN AMERICA--TO COMPLETE THE BATTLE WE BEGAN LAST NIGHT ATOP YOUR REGAL TOWNHOUSE--
NOT SO FAST, GORILLA-GUY!
YOU JUMPED THE GUN--BY ATTACKIN' SOONER THAN WE AGREED ON!
THEN, SINCE YOUR FIRST LITTLE STUNT DIDN'T FINISH HIM OFF--
I CLAIM THE RIGHT TO TAKE HIM ON--WITH MY DEADLY LASER!
JUST LIKE YOU--TO FIND COURAGE--WHILE I'M GROGGY FROM THE FALL--!
14

THEN PIETRO SHALL BUY YOU THE EXTRA MOMENTS YOU NEED TO RECOVER, CAP!
FOR, MY SPEED-CONDITIONED BODY ENABLED ME TO ABSORB THE TOTAL SHOCK!
QUICKSILVER!
WE ALL KNOW MY NAME, LASER!
SUPPOSE YOU TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW--WHEN YOU AWAKEN!
THE LIVING LASER IS A FOOL!
INSTEAD OF TALKING, HE SHOULD HAVE SMASHED YOU--AS I NOW SHALL DO!
YOU MEAN --AS YOU'RE GONNA TRY TO DO, JUNGLE JIM!
I MAY NOT BE YOUR MATCH IN RAW POWER
BUT A FEW DECADES OF CRIMEBUSTING HAVE TAUGHT ME HOW TO-- HIT 'EM LOW!
IF YOU THOUGHT ONE PUNCH WOULD KAYO ME, SPEEDY, YOU GOT ANOTHER THINK COMIN'!
BLAST IT! WHY DON'T YOU STAND STILL AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN-- NOT A BLAMED ROADRUNNER?
TO EACH HIS OWN FIGHTING STYLE, LASER!
SSZZZT
SZZZRRZZ
15



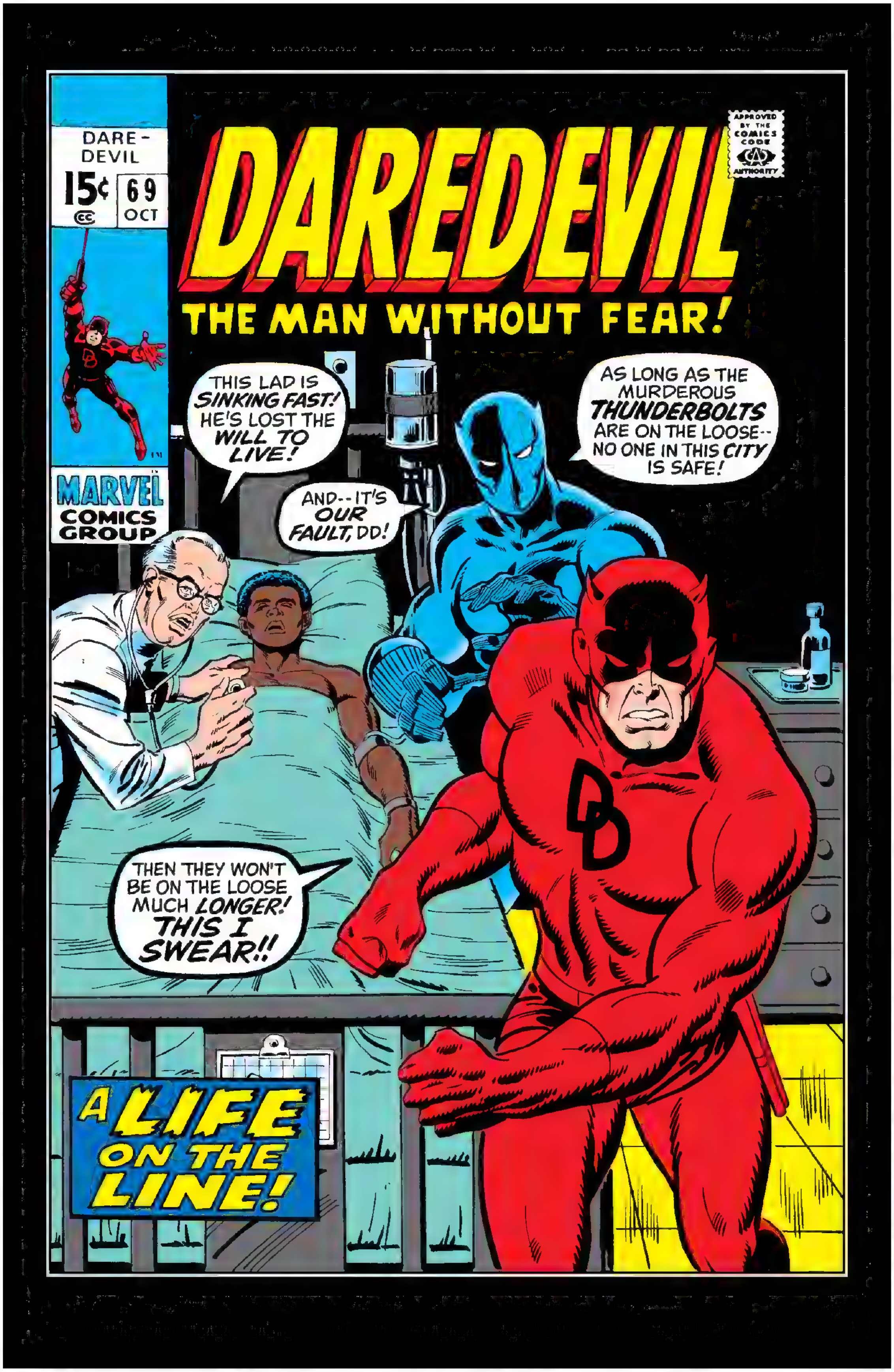
STILL, IF NOTHING BUT A RIGHT TO THE JAW WILL SATISFY YOU--
AARRH!
HAH! I GOT THAT FAST-FOOTED FREAK BY ACCIDENT!
I MISSED HIM WITH MY LASERS --BUT SCATTERED CONCRETE ALL OVER THE PLACE--
--AN' HE RAN RIGHT INTO IT!
THAT LUNATIC LASER HAS TIED MY NUMBER OF CAPTURES--WITH ONE STROKE OF FORTUNE!
BUT I WON'T LET HIM STAY MY EQUAL--NOT WHILE I AM THE STRONGEST OF ALL THE LETHAL LEGION!
MAN-APE, YOU MUST BE OUT OF YOUR FUR-COVERED SKULL!
DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M GOING TO PLAY SITTING DUCK WHILE YOU HURL THAT THING?
IT NEED NOT PHYSICALLY STRIKE YOU, AVENGER--
RRAKKK
--BUT MERELY SHATTER THE HYDRAULIC GENERATORS BEHIND YOU!
THE RATHER FORMIDABLE WATER PRESSURE WILL DO THE REST!
HE IS DOWN-- A FAR EASIER VICTORY THAN I WOULD HAVE IMAGINED!
THESE AVENGERS ARE VASTLY OVERRATED, IN THE EYES OF THE MAN-APE!
YEAH? WELL, A COUPLE OF GUYS NAMED THOR AND IRON MAN ARE STILL KICKIN' AROUND LOOSE!
WE'LL SEE HOW YA FEEL AFTER YOU TANGLE WITH THEM...!
16


HOWEVER, FOR THE NONCE, THE GRIM REAPER WOULD SEEM TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE CAPTIVES AT HAND... FOR, ERE LONG...
AHHH... NOW THIS IS A SIGHT I'VE WAITED LONG TO SEE!
A QUINTET OF MIGHTY AVENGERS... SLOWLY PERISHING, AS DEADLY VAPORS FILL THEIR HALF OF A MAMMOTH HOURGLASS!
BUT, REAPER... I THOUGHT THE AVENGERS KILLED YOUR BROTHER BEFORE MOST OF THESE GUYS WERE EVEN DUES-PAYIN' MEMBERS!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER, LASER! IT'S ENOUGH THAT THEY ARE AVENGERS!
ALL WHO TAKE THAT ACCURSED NAME, I HAVE SWORN TO DESTROY!
SWORDSMAN! WHY HASN'T POWER MAN JOINED US YET?
HE WENT TO RANSACK THE AVENGERS' MANSION, REAPER!
WHAT? DOESN'T HE REALIZE HOW DANGEROUS-- WAIT! HERE HE COMES NOW!
AND BEARING GIFTS, IT WOULD SEEM...
...INCLUDING THE LIMP FORM OF THE ANDROID THEY CALL THE VISION!
WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU MUSCLE-BOUND CLOD!
TOSS HIM INTO THE TANK... AND IF HE BREATHES, HE'LL DIE WITH HIS FELLOWS!
17


AND WHAT ARE THESE YOU BROUGHT? AHH... THE PERSONAL FILES OF THE VARIOUS AVENGERS!
HOW IRONIC THAT I SHOULD FIRST BE LEARNING ABOUT SOME OF THEM, EVEN AS THEY GASP FOR AIR!
VISION
QUICKSILVER
CAPTAIN AMERICA
I'LL READ FIRST OF THE VISION, THEIR MOST RECENT ...INDEED THEIR FINAL ACQUISITION!
PERHAPS SOMETHING HERE WILL MAKE A FIT EPITAPH FOR--
NO! NO!!
IF THESE PAPERS SPEAK THE TRUTH--THEN IT'S I WHO HAVE CONDEMNED MY BROTHER SIMON TO DEATH!
NOT THE AVENGERS--BUT I!
FOR, THOUGH SIMON'S BODY MAY HAVE DIED, THEY SAY HIS BRAIN PATTERN WAS PRESERVED--
--TO BECOME THE MENTAL BASIS OF--THE VISION!
REAPER!
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?
IF YOU SWING THAT SCYTHE, YOU'LL SMASH THE HOURGLASS!
PRECISELY WHAT I INTEND TO DO, YOU FOOL!
I ONLY PRAY--THAT I'M NOT TOO LATE!
SMAASH!
L-LEMME OUTTA THERE!
AIR! GOTTA HAVE--AIR!
WHAT?
REAPER--I HAVE KNOWN THE VISION--AND THAT IS NOT HIS VOICE!
THEN--THE NEED FOR THIS MASQUERADE IS ENDED!
THE VISION TRADED PLACES WITH POWER MAN!
HE MUST HAVE FOLLOWED ME HERE!

BUT HE'LL NEVER LEAVE THIS CHAMBER ALIVE!
--EH??
IN YOUR IMPATIENCE, YOU FORGET--
--THAT ONE WHO CAN BECOME AS HARD AS DIAMOND CAN HARDLY PERISH BY THE SWORD!
WHILE, EVEN AS THE OTHER AVENGERS TUMBLE FORTH FROM THE VAPOR-FILLED GLASS...
NOW, WEAKLING, WE SHALL FINISH WHAT WE HAVE TWICE BEGUN!
YOU'RE... RIGHT THERE, M'BAKU!
BUT... WE'LL DO IT... MY WAY...!
...LIKE, BY THROWING MY ALL INTO ONE PUNCH... WHICH THROWS YOU HEADLONG INTO YOUR OWN CONTROL PANEL!
UHHNNN!
LOOKS LIKE THE MAN-APE'S SKULL WAS AS SOFT AS HIS BRAIN!
SZZZZZ
SZ
WELL, OL' QUICKSILVER WON'T HAVE THAT EASY A TIME WITH THE LIVING LASER!
HUH? THE WAY YOU DODGED MY BLASTS--
HOW? WHEN YOU'RE STILL GROGGY FROM JUST WAKIN' UP--?
THE OBVIOUS ANSWER, MY FRIEND--
--IS THAT WE WERE NEVER FULLY UNCONSCIOUS!
WE SIMPLY PLAYED ALONG WITH YOU--
--SO WE COULD BE SURE TO CAPTURE ALL OF YOU--TOGETHER!

AND NOW, REAPER, IT'S TIME YOU WERE PUT UNDER WRAPS!
--ALTHOUGH I RATHER HATE KICKING A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH!
BLACKIE, YOU'RE GONNA DEVELOP A SENSAHUMOR YET!
THEN, WHEN THE LAST LETHAL LEGIONNAIRE IS SUBDUED...
I STILL...DON'T GET IT! HOW'D YOU KNOW WE WERE LAYIN' FOR YOU?
THE PANTHER TOLD US!
WHEN CONTACTING US, HE USED THE WORDS "PROMETHEUS PRIORITY"--OUR CODE FOR "SUSPECTED TRAP"!
I COULD NOT BE CERTAIN--BUT MY ESCAPE SEEMED FAR TOO EASY!
STILL, IT'S THE VISION WHO IS THE HERO HERE!
WITHOUT HIM, WE'D HAVE HAD TO PUNCH OUR WAY OUTTA THAT HOUR-GLASS!
IF HE HAD NOT BEEN REVEALED AS THE GRIM REAPER'S BROTHER--
BUT I AM NOT HIS BROTHER--NOR AM I BROTHER TO ANY TRUE HUMAN BEING!
AND THAT IS WHY--I HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE THE AVENGERS!
VISION--NO! YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT--!
BUT I DO MEAN IT--I MUST MEAN IT!
WHAT PLACE HAVE I--A COLD, SYNTHETIC THING--AMONG MEN OF FLESH AND BLOOD?
THE SWORDSMAN SAID I WOULD NEVER LEAVE THIS CHAMBER ALIVE!
20
PERHAPS HE SPOKE MORE RIGHTLY THAN HE KNEW!
I HAVE LEFT--AND YET--
CAN AN ANDROID TRULY BE--ALIVE--?
FINIS


DARE-DEVIL
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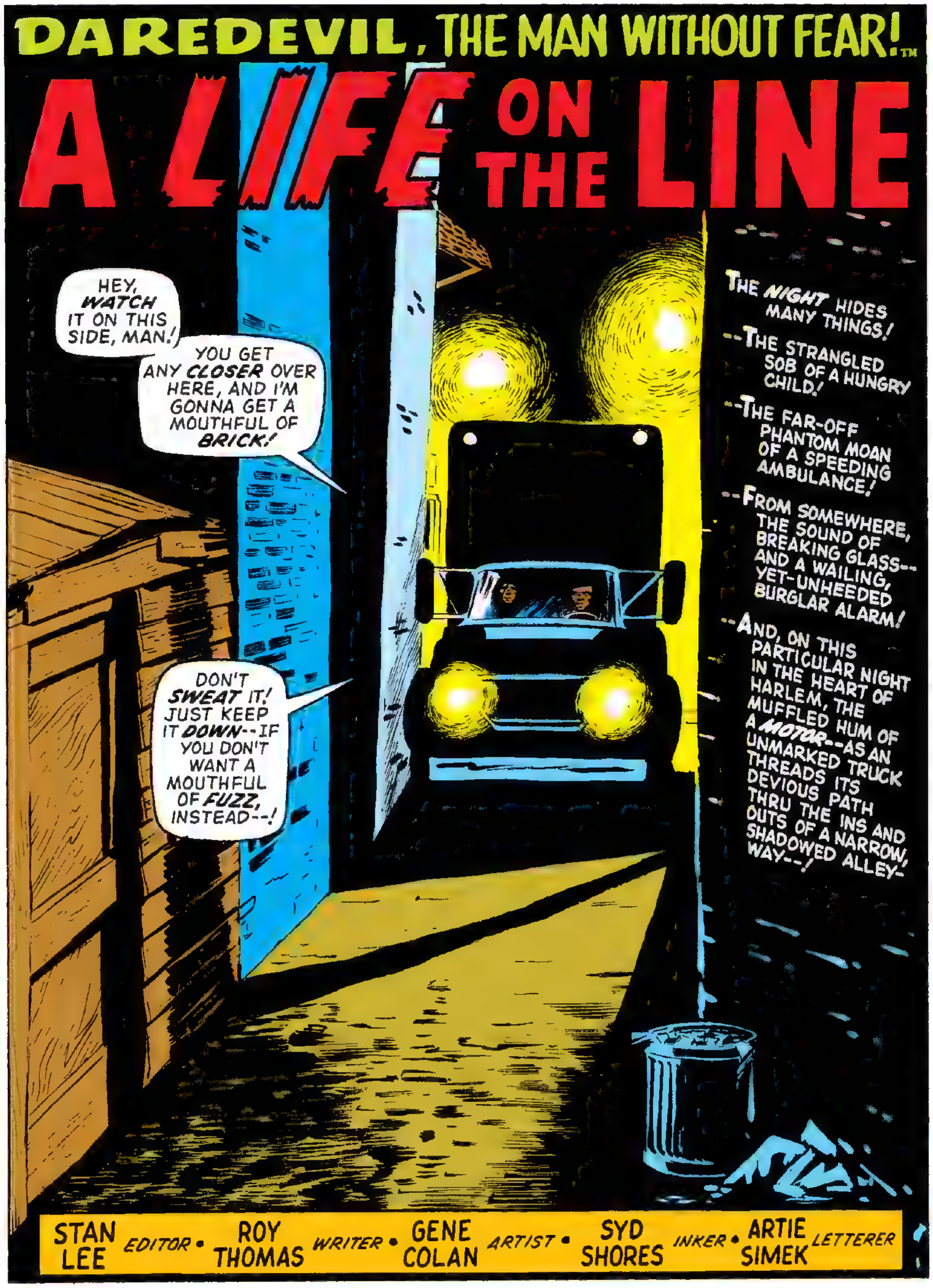
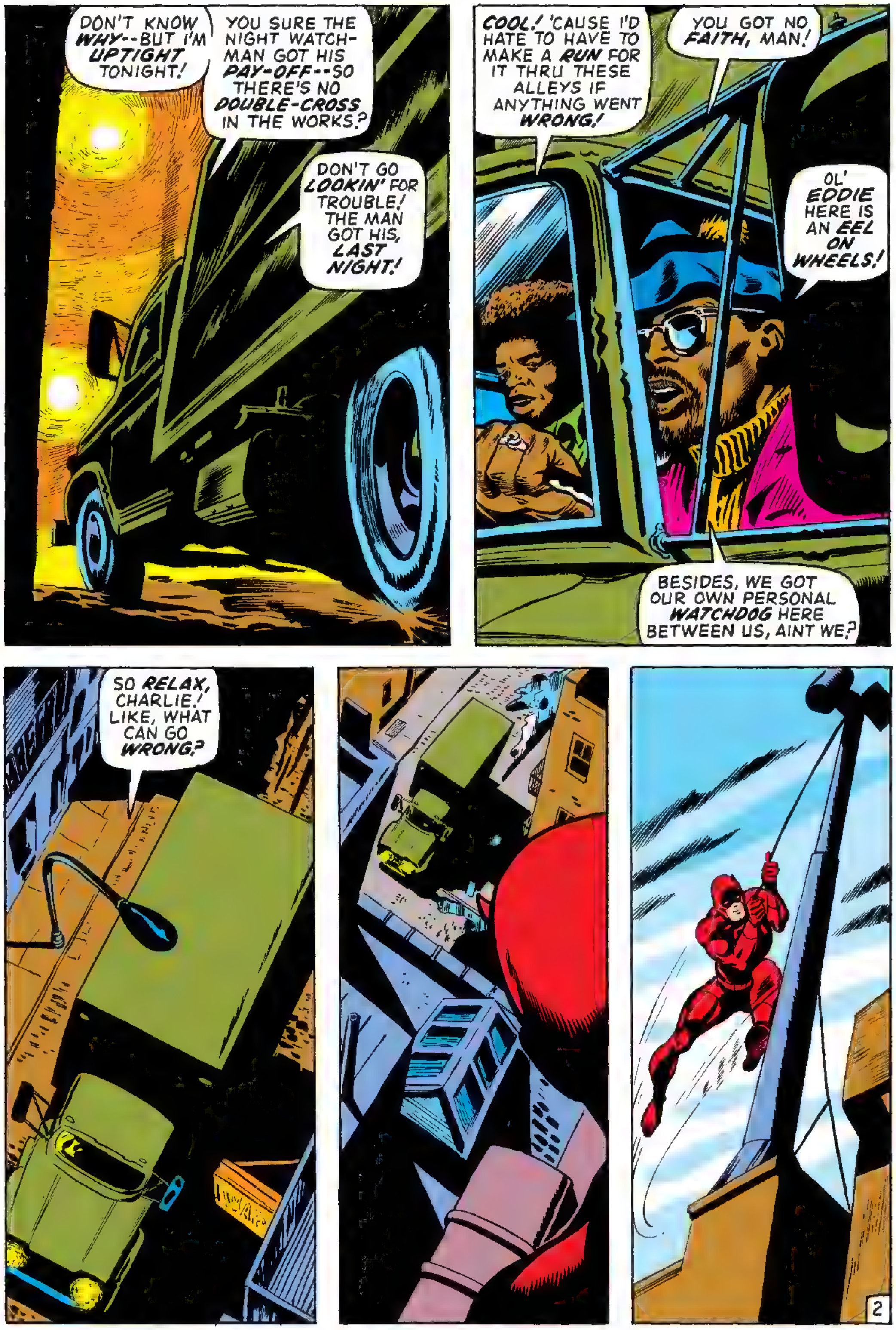
69
OCT
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
THIS LAD IS SINKING FAST! HE'S LOST THE WILL TO LIVE!
AND--IT'S OUR FAULT, DD!
AS LONG AS THE MURDEROUS THUNDERBOLTS ARE ON THE LOOSE-- NO ONE IN THIS CITY IS SAFE!
THEN THEY WON'T BE ON THE LOOSE MUCH LONGER! THIS I SWEAR!!
A LIFE ON THE LINE!


DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
A LIFE ON THE LINE
THE NIGHT HIDES MANY THINGS! --THE STRANGLED SOB OF A HUNGRY CHILD! --THE FAR-OFF PHANTOM MOAN OF A SPEEDING AMBULANCE! --FROM SOMEWHERE, THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS-- AND A WAILING, YET-UNHEEDED BURGLAR ALARM! --AND, ON THIS PARTICULAR NIGHT IN THE HEART OF HARLEM, THE MUFFLED HUM OF A MOTOR--AS AN UNMARKED TRUCK THREADS ITS DEVIOUS PATH THRU THE INS AND OUTS OF A NARROW, SHADOWED ALLEY-WAY--!
HEY, WATCH IT ON THIS SIDE, MAN!
YOU GET ANY CLOSER OVER HERE, AND I'M GONNA GET A MOUTHFUL OF BRICK!
DON'T SWEAT IT! JUST KEEP IT DOWN--IF YOU DON'T WANT A MOUTHFUL OF FUZZ, INSTEAD--!
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • GENE COLAN ARTIST • SYD SHORES INKER • ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER

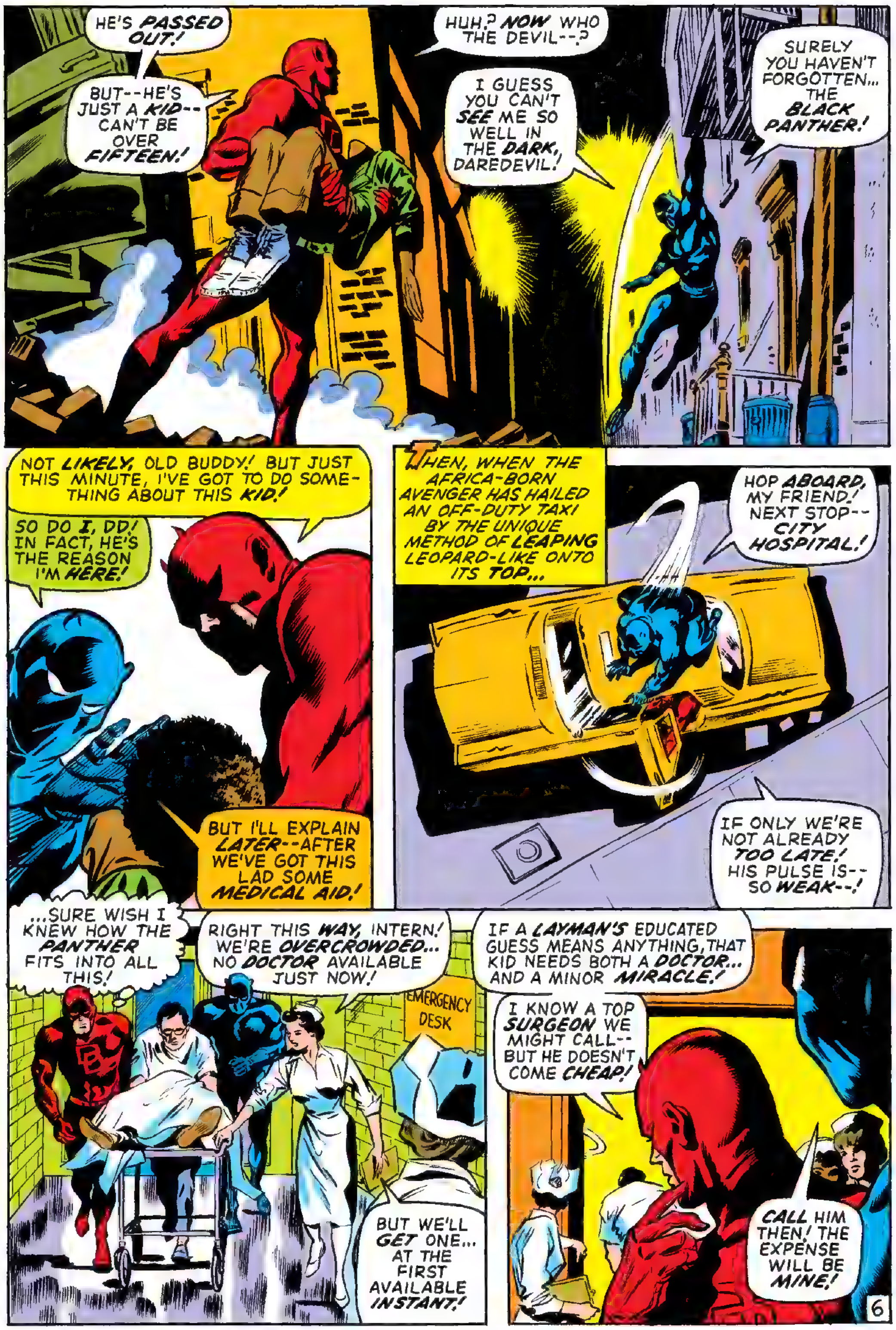


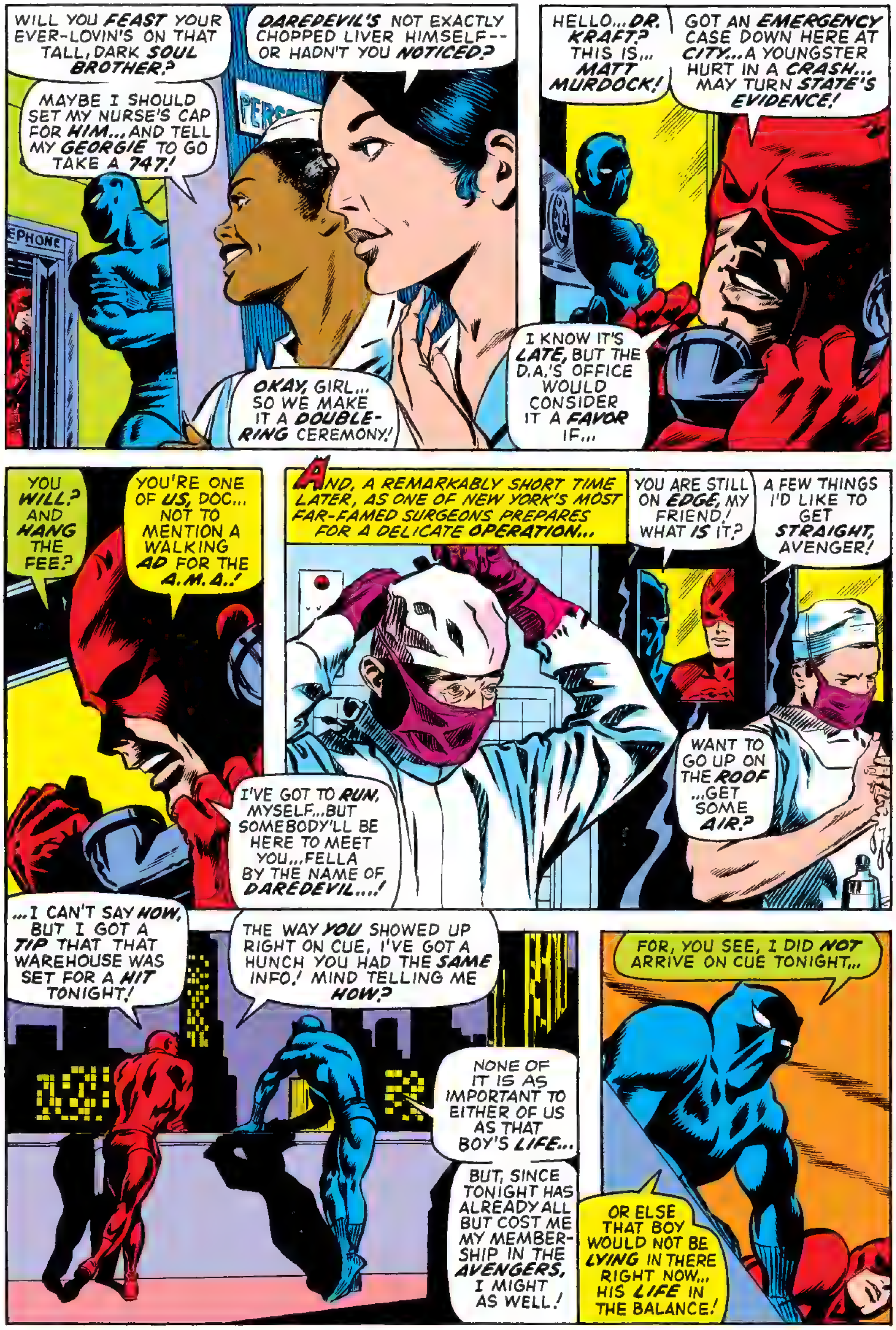
DON'T KNOW WHY--BUT I'M UPTIGHT TONIGHT!
YOU SURE THE NIGHT WATCHMAN GOT HIS PAY-OFF--SO THERE'S NO DOUBLE-CROSS IN THE WORKS?
DON'T GO LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE! THE MAN GOT HIS, LAST NIGHT!
COOL! 'CAUSE I'D HATE TO HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT THRU THESE ALLEYS IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG!
YOU GOT NO FAITH, MAN!
OL' EDDIE HERE IS AN EEL ON WHEELS!
BESIDES, WE GOT OUR OWN PERSONAL WATCHDOG HERE BETWEEN US, AINT WE?
SO RELAX, CHARLIE! LIKE, WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
2

COAST CLEAR, BABY? I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHIN' JUST NOW!
IT'S CLEAR! BUT GET A MOVE ON, WILLYA?
I DON'T LIKE THIS SET-UP! IT'S TOO RISKY!
LISTEN TO THE MAN! TAKES OUR DOUGH, AND THEN STARTS GRIPIN'!
SERVE 'IM RIGHT IF WE TOOK OUR BREAD BACK--AND GRABBED THE STUFF FOR FREE!
THEY SAY THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE, FELLA--
--INCLUDING A ONE-WAY TICKET TO THE STATE PEN!
KRAASH!
HOLY CRUD! IT'S--DAREDEVIL!
I TOLD YOU I HEARD SOMETHIN', MAN! I TOLD YA!!
3

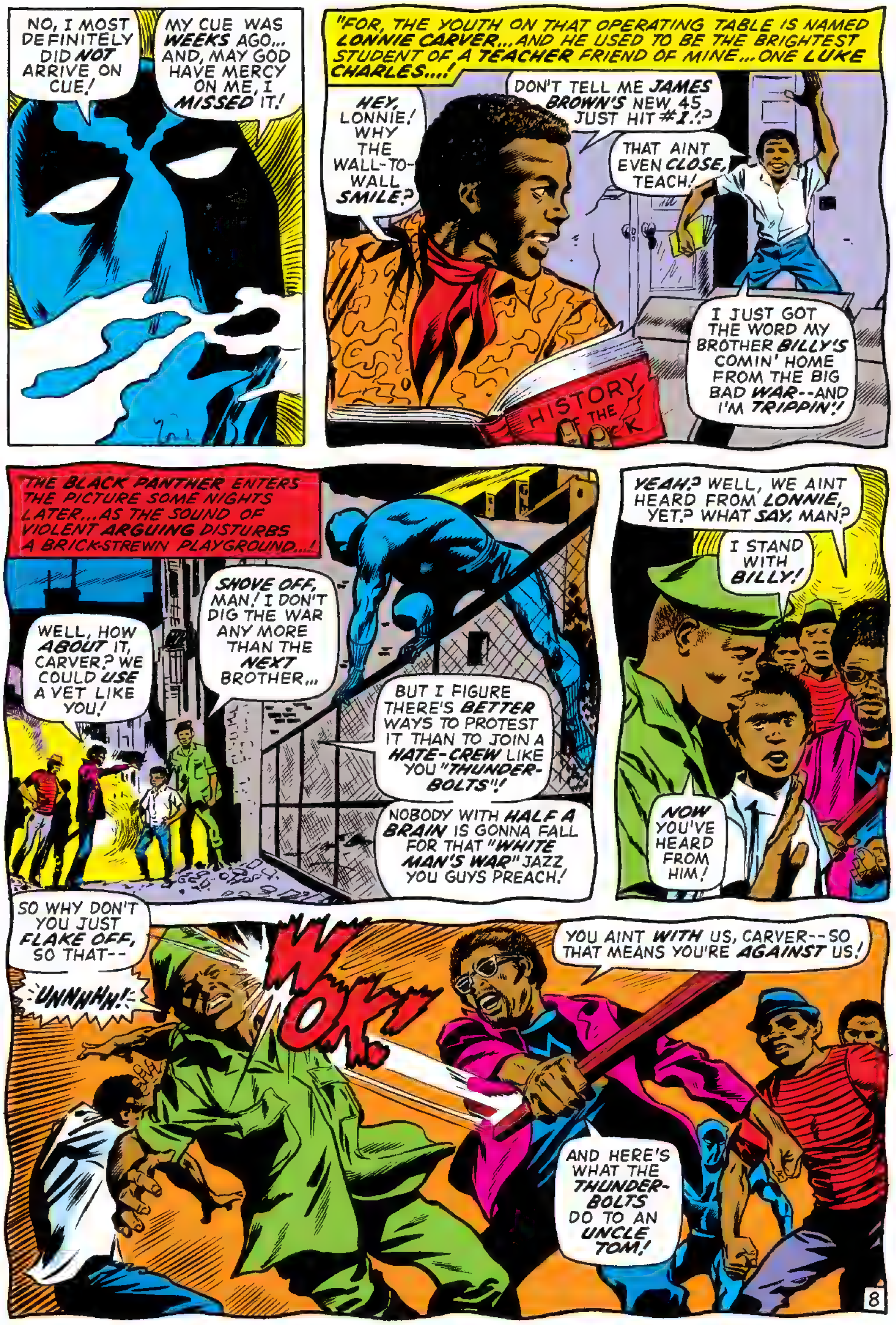
YOU FELLAS WILL HAVE TO COME UP WITH BETTER DIALOGUE THAN THAT--OR I'LL DOZE OFF BEFORE I FINISH BUSTIN' YOU!
MMMFF!
YOU COULD'VE CAUGHT THEM TWO AWAY FROM THE WAREHOUSE, MASKED MAN, AND I WOULDN'T HAVE CARED!
SHIPPING STACK 3
BUT I'M CLEAN UP TILL NOW--AND MY RECORD'S STAYIN' THAT WAY!
MISTER, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I HATE WORSE THAN A CROOK--
WOP!
--IT'S A CROOK WITH A BADGE--ANY BADGE!
SNEAKING UP BEHIND ME, HUH? WELL, DON'T KNOCK YOURSELF OUT ON MY ACCOUNT, GUY!
KBONK!
...AND BABY MAKES THREE!
BTOK!
THERE! THAT OUGHT TO-- UH-OH!
LOOKS LIKE THEY HAD A LOOKOUT MAN IN THE TRUCK!
HE'S TAKING OFF--LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELSINKI!

BUT--THE WAY THAT TRUCK'S CAREENING AROUND, THAT HOOD MUST'VE GOT HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE FROM SEARS AND ROEBUCK!
VRUMM
THEN, EVEN AS DAREDEVIL SPEAKS, THE MASSIVE TRUCK SEEMS TO GO COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL--
SKREEE
--TO CRASH WITH THE FORCE OF A MANY-TONNED SLEDGEHAMMER INTO THE SIDE OF A SOLID BRICK BUILDING--!
KRAAASH
I CAN STILL DETECT A HEARTBEAT COMING FROM THE WRECK--BUT IT'S A WEAK ONE!
WELL, WHOEVER'S INSIDE THERE, IT'S A SURE BET HE HAD IT COMING!
BILLY--YOU GOTTA HELP ME, BILLY--IT HURTS--!


HE'S PASSED OUT!
BUT--HE'S JUST A KID--CAN'T BE OVER FIFTEEN!
HUH? NOW WHO THE DEVIL--?
I GUESS YOU CAN'T SEE ME SO WELL IN THE DARK, DAREDEVIL!
SURELY YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN... THE BLACK PANTHER!
NOT LIKELY, OLD BUDDY! BUT JUST THIS MINUTE, I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS KID!
SO DO I, DD! IN FACT, HE'S THE REASON I'M HERE!
BUT I'LL EXPLAIN LATER--AFTER WE'VE GOT THIS LAD SOME MEDICAL AID!
THEN, WHEN THE AFRICA-BORN AVENGER HAS HAILED AN OFF-DUTY TAXI BY THE UNIQUE METHOD OF LEAPING LEOPARD-LIKE ONTO ITS TOP...
HOP ABOARD, MY FRIEND! NEXT STOP--CITY HOSPITAL!
IF ONLY WE'RE NOT ALREADY TOO LATE! HIS PULSE IS--SO WEAK--!
...SURE WISH I KNEW HOW THE PANTHER FITS INTO ALL THIS!
RIGHT THIS WAY, INTERN! WE'RE OVERCROWDED... NO DOCTOR AVAILABLE JUST NOW!
EMERGENCY DESK
BUT WE'LL GET ONE... AT THE FIRST AVAILABLE INSTANT!
IF A LAYMAN'S EDUCATED GUESS MEANS ANYTHING, THAT KID NEEDS BOTH A DOCTOR... AND A MINOR MIRACLE!
I KNOW A TOP SURGEON WE MIGHT CALL--BUT HE DOESN'T COME CHEAP!
CALL HIM THEN! THE EXPENSE WILL BE MINE!
6



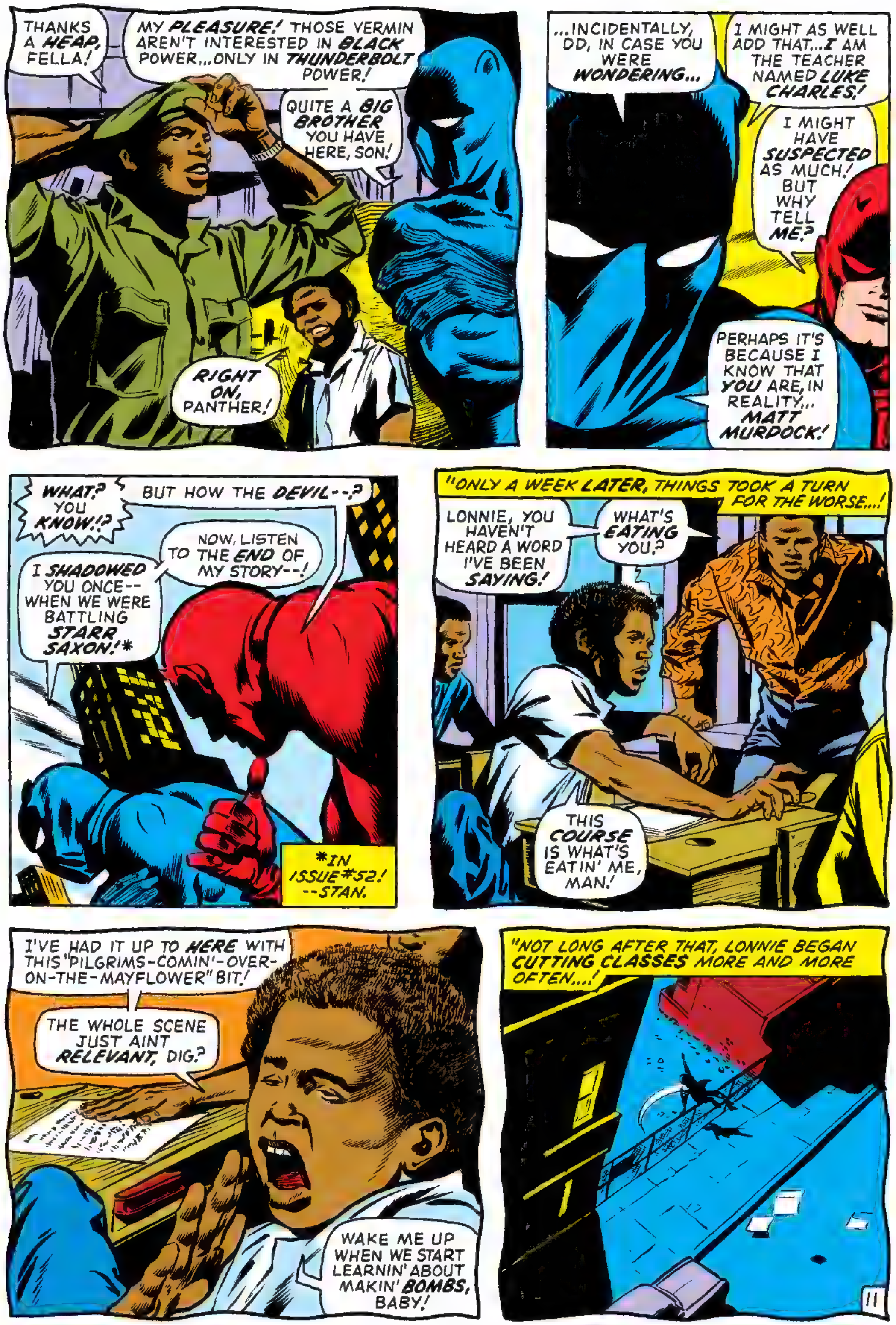
WILL YOU FEAST YOUR EVER-LOVIN'S ON THAT TALL, DARK SOUL BROTHER?
MAYBE I SHOULD SET MY NURSE'S CAP FOR HIM... AND TELL MY GEORGIE TO GO TAKE A 747!
DAREDEVIL'S NOT EXACTLY CHOPPED LIVER HIMSELF-- OR HADN'T YOU NOTICED?
OKAY, GIRL... SO WE MAKE IT A DOUBLE-RING CEREMONY!
HELLO... DR. KRAFT? THIS IS... MATT MURDOCK!
GOT AN EMERGENCY CASE DOWN HERE AT CITY... A YOUNGSTER HURT IN A CRASH... MAY TURN STATE'S EVIDENCE!
I KNOW IT'S LATE, BUT THE D.A.'S OFFICE WOULD CONSIDER IT A FAVOR IF...
YOU WILL? AND HANG THE FEE?
YOU'RE ONE OF US, DOC... NOT TO MENTION A WALKING AD FOR THE A.M.A.!
I'VE GOT TO RUN, MYSELF... BUT SOMEBODY'LL BE HERE TO MEET YOU... FELLA BY THE NAME OF DAREDEVIL...!
AND, A REMARKABLY SHORT TIME LATER, AS ONE OF NEW YORK'S MOST FAR-FAMED SURGEONS PREPARES FOR A DELICATE OPERATION...
YOU ARE STILL ON EDGE, MY FRIEND! WHAT IS IT?
A FEW THINGS I'D LIKE TO GET STRAIGHT, AVENGER!
WANT TO GO UP ON THE ROOF ...GET SOME AIR?
...I CAN'T SAY HOW, BUT I GOT A TIP THAT THAT WAREHOUSE WAS SET FOR A HIT TONIGHT!
THE WAY YOU SHOWED UP RIGHT ON CUE, I'VE GOT A HUNCH YOU HAD THE SAME INFO! MIND TELLING ME HOW?
NONE OF IT IS AS IMPORTANT TO EITHER OF US AS THAT BOY'S LIFE...
BUT, SINCE TONIGHT HAS ALREADY ALL BUT COST ME MY MEMBERSHIP IN THE AVENGERS, I MIGHT AS WELL!
FOR, YOU SEE, I DID NOT ARRIVE ON CUE TONIGHT...
OR ELSE THAT BOY WOULD NOT BE LYING IN THERE RIGHT NOW... HIS LIFE IN THE BALANCE!



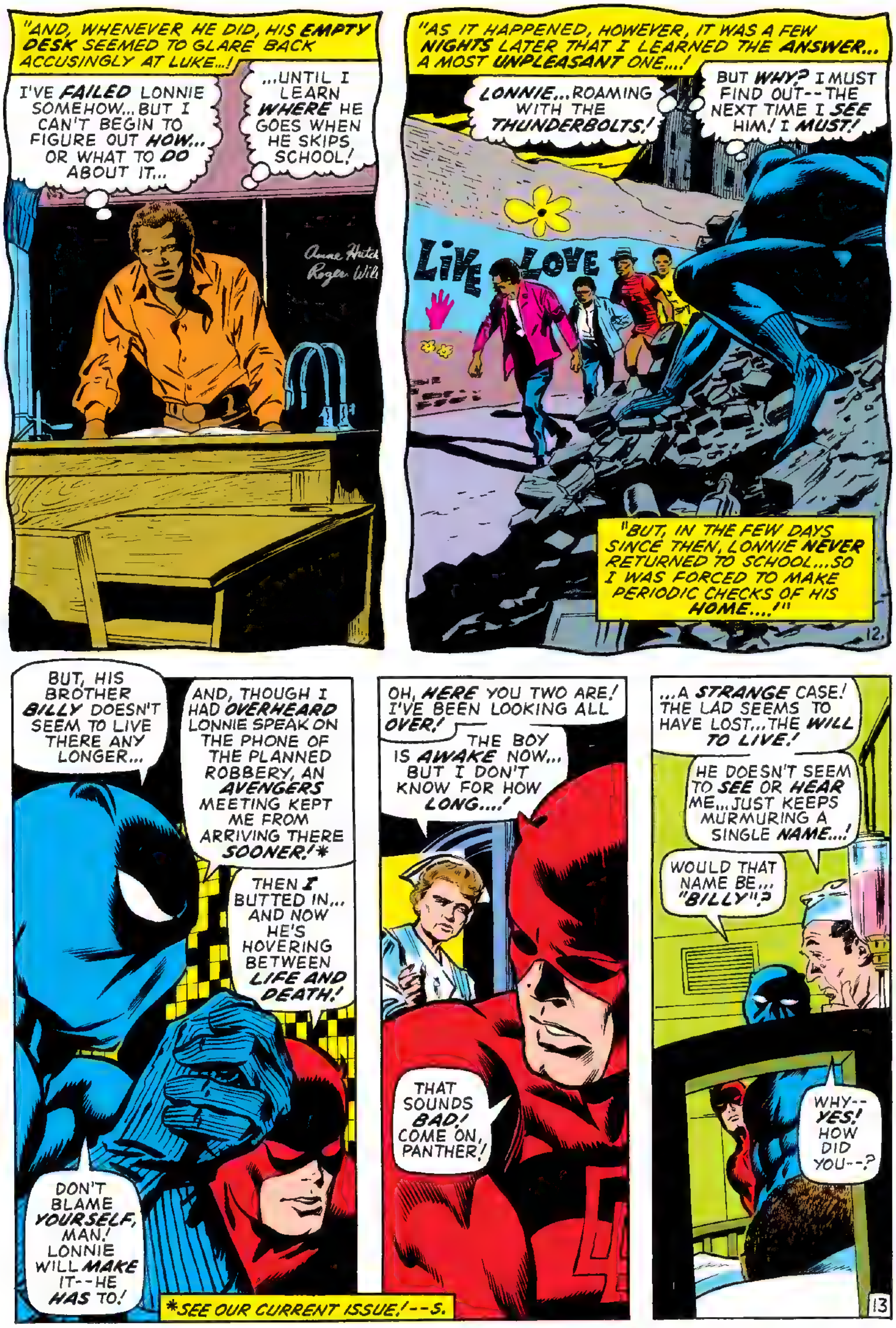
NO, I MOST DEFINITELY DID NOT ARRIVE ON CUE!
MY CUE WAS WEEKS AGO... AND, MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON ME, I MISSED IT!
"FOR, THE YOUTH ON THAT OPERATING TABLE IS NAMED LONNIE CARVER... AND HE USED TO BE THE BRIGHTEST STUDENT OF A TEACHER FRIEND OF MINE... ONE LUKE CHARLES...!
HEY, LONNIE! WHY THE WALL-TO-WALL SMILE?
DON'T TELL ME JAMES BROWN'S NEW 45 JUST HIT #1!?
THAT AINT EVEN CLOSE, TEACH!
I JUST GOT THE WORD MY BROTHER BILLY'S COMIN' HOME FROM THE BIG BAD WAR--AND I'M TRIPPIN'!
HISTORY
THE BLACK PANTHER ENTERS THE PICTURE SOME NIGHTS LATER... AS THE SOUND OF VIOLENT ARGUING DISTURBS A BRICK-STREWN PLAYGROUND...!
WELL, HOW ABOUT IT, CARVER? WE COULD USE A VET LIKE YOU!
SHOVE OFF, MAN! I DON'T DIG THE WAR ANY MORE THAN THE NEXT BROTHER...
BUT I FIGURE THERE'S BETTER WAYS TO PROTEST IT THAN TO JOIN A HATE-CREW LIKE YOU "THUNDER-BOLTS"!
NOBODY WITH HALF A BRAIN IS GONNA FALL FOR THAT "WHITE MAN'S WAR" JAZZ YOU GUYS PREACH!
YEAH? WELL, WE AINT HEARD FROM LONNIE, YET? WHAT SAY, MAN?
I STAND WITH BILLY!
NOW YOU'VE HEARD FROM HIM!
SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST FLAKE OFF, SO THAT--
UNNHHH!
WOK!
YOU AINT WITH US, CARVER--SO THAT MEANS YOU'RE AGAINST US!
AND HERE'S WHAT THE THUNDER-BOLTS DO TO AN UNCLE TOM!
8

BILLY! GET UP, BILLY! DON'T LET 'EM SCUM ON YOU--!
YOU HEARD THE KID, BILLY-BOY!
WHY DON'TCHA LEARN US ALL A LESSON?
NO! I DID MY SHARE OF FIGHTIN'--AN' I KNOW WHAT TOTIN' A WEAPON CAN DO TO A MAN!
I'M THRU WITH BLOODSHED--IN RICE PADDIES OR IN HARLEM!
YEAH? WELL, MAYBE YOU'RE ALL THRU SHEDDIN' OTHER PEOPLE'S BLOOD, UNCLE TOM, BUT--
NO!
YOU HEARD THE LAD, MY FRIEND! HE SAID NO!
HUH?!
HEY! IT'S--THE PANTHER!!
BUTT OUTTA THIS ONE, BABY--YOU AINT GOT NO RIGHT--!
RIGHT? YOU DARE SPEAK OF MEN'S RIGHTS--WHILE YOUR EVERY GESTURE IS A MENACE--YOUR EVERY WORD A THREAT?
HERE! SPEAK TO YOUR FELLOW THUNDER-BOLTS ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS!
WHOMP!
YOU ARE BOTH CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH!
9

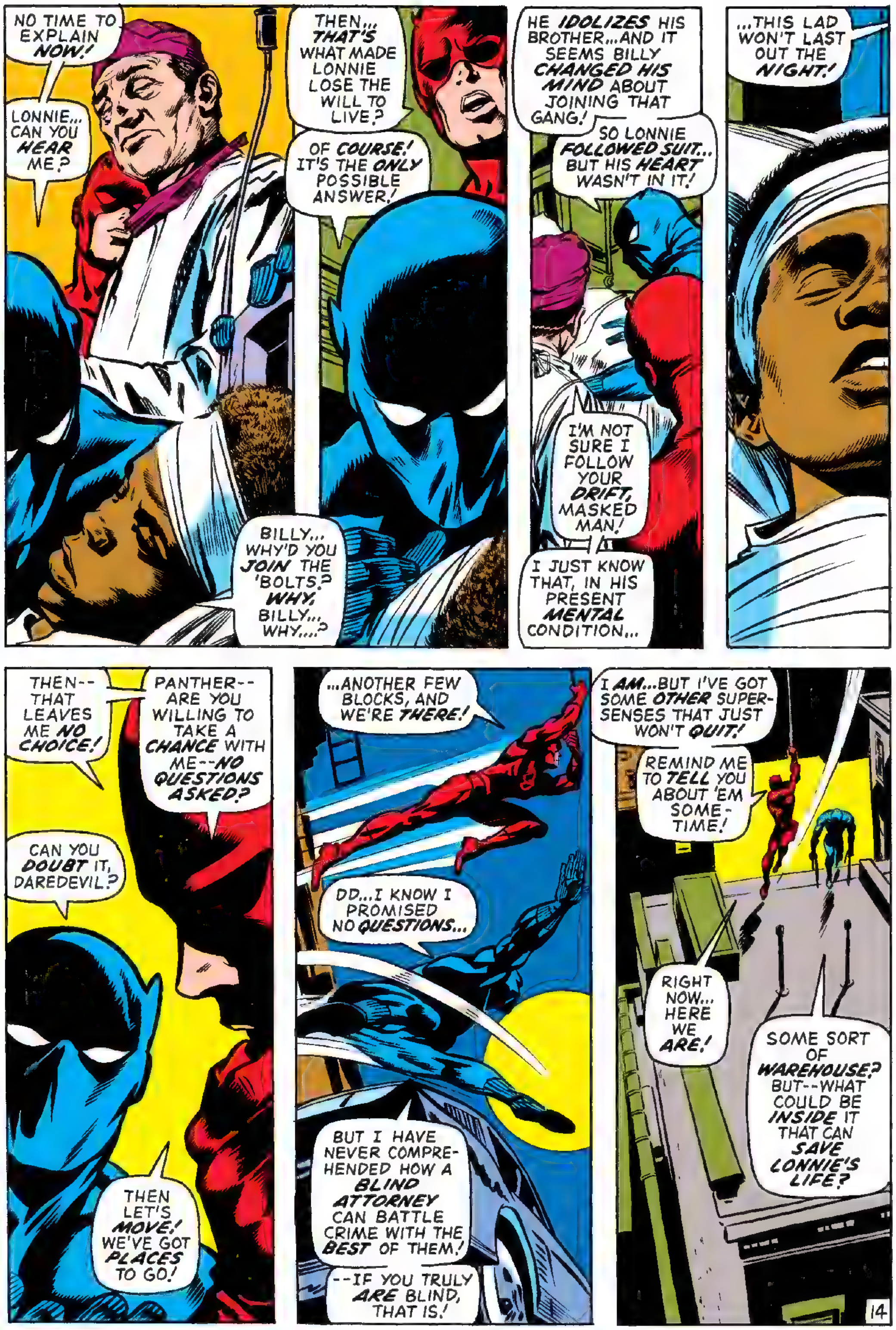
TAKE 'IM, CLYDE! SHOW 'IM HE CAN'T MESS WITH THE THUNDERBOLTS!
CONSIDER 'IM SHOWED, TURK! WHEN I'M THRU WITH 'IM, HE'LL--
WHUMMFF!
HOLY JOE! THAT AVENGER'S WORTH A WHOLE REGIMENT!
COMING FROM YOU, SOLDIER, I SHALL CONSIDER THAT A COMPLIMENT!
WELL, EVEN A REGIMENT CAN GET ITSELF CREAMED, PIG!
NO DOUBT IT CAN, MY UNCOORDI-NATED FRIEND,..
...BUT IF SO, IT WILL NOT BE BY A FOURSOME WHOSE IDEA OF A FAIR FIGHT IS TO GANG UP ON A PEACE-LOVING VETERAN AND A 15-YEAR-OLD!
HMMM...IT APPEARS MY LONG-WINDED SPEECH DROVE OFF YOUR BACK-UP MEN!
AND, I AM SURE YOU'D PREFER TO JOIN THEM....!
WRAK!
LET'S SPLIT! WE'LL SETTLE UP WITH UNCLE TOM LATER!



THANKS A HEAP, FELLA!
MY PLEASURE! THOSE VERMIN AREN'T INTERESTED IN BLACK POWER,...ONLY IN THUNDERBOLT POWER!
QUITE A BIG BROTHER YOU HAVE HERE, SON!
RIGHT ON, PANTHER!
...INCIDENTALLY, DD, IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING...
I MIGHT AS WELL ADD THAT...I AM THE TEACHER NAMED LUKE CHARLES!
I MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED AS MUCH! BUT WHY TELL ME?
PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE I KNOW THAT YOU ARE, IN REALITY,.. MATT MURDOCK!
WHAT? YOU KNOW!?
BUT HOW THE DEVIL--?
NOW, LISTEN TO THE END OF MY STORY--!
I SHADOWED YOU ONCE-- WHEN WE WERE BATTLING STARR SAXON!*
*IN ISSUE #52! --STAN.
"ONLY A WEEK LATER, THINGS TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE...!
LONNIE, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I'VE BEEN SAYING!
WHAT'S EATING YOU?
THIS COURSE IS WHAT'S EATIN' ME, MAN!
I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH THIS "PILGRIMS-COMIN'-OVER-ON-THE-MAYFLOWER" BIT!
THE WHOLE SCENE JUST AINT RELEVANT, DIG?
WAKE ME UP WHEN WE START LEARNIN' ABOUT MAKIN' BOMBS, BABY!
"NOT LONG AFTER THAT, LONNIE BEGAN CUTTING CLASSES MORE AND MORE OFTEN...!
11



"AND, WHENEVER HE DID, HIS EMPTY DESK SEEMED TO GLARE BACK ACCUSINGLY AT LUKE...!
I'VE FAILED LONNIE SOMEHOW...BUT I CAN'T BEGIN TO FIGURE OUT HOW... OR WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT...
...UNTIL I LEARN WHERE HE GOES WHEN HE SKIPS SCHOOL!
"AS IT HAPPENED, HOWEVER, IT WAS A FEW NIGHTS LATER THAT I LEARNED THE ANSWER... A MOST UNPLEASANT ONE...!
LONNIE...ROAMING WITH THE THUNDERBOLTS!
BUT WHY? I MUST FIND OUT--THE NEXT TIME I SEE HIM! I MUST!
LIVE LOVE
"BUT, IN THE FEW DAYS SINCE THEN, LONNIE NEVER RETURNED TO SCHOOL...SO I WAS FORCED TO MAKE PERIODIC CHECKS OF HIS HOME....!"
12.
BUT, HIS BROTHER BILLY DOESN'T SEEM TO LIVE THERE ANY LONGER...
AND, THOUGH I HAD OVERHEARD LONNIE SPEAK ON THE PHONE OF THE PLANNED ROBBERY, AN AVENGERS MEETING KEPT ME FROM ARRIVING THERE SOONER!*
THEN I BUTTED IN... AND NOW HE'S HOVERING BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!
DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, MAN! LONNIE WILL MAKE IT--HE HAS TO!
*SEE OUR CURRENT ISSUE!--S.
OH, HERE YOU TWO ARE! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER!
THE BOY IS AWAKE NOW... BUT I DON'T KNOW FOR HOW LONG...!
THAT SOUNDS BAD! COME ON, PANTHER!
...A STRANGE CASE! THE LAD SEEMS TO HAVE LOST...THE WILL TO LIVE!
HE DOESN'T SEEM TO SEE OR HEAR ME...JUST KEEPS MURMURING A SINGLE NAME...!
WOULD THAT NAME BE... "BILLY"?
WHY--YES! HOW DID YOU--?
13

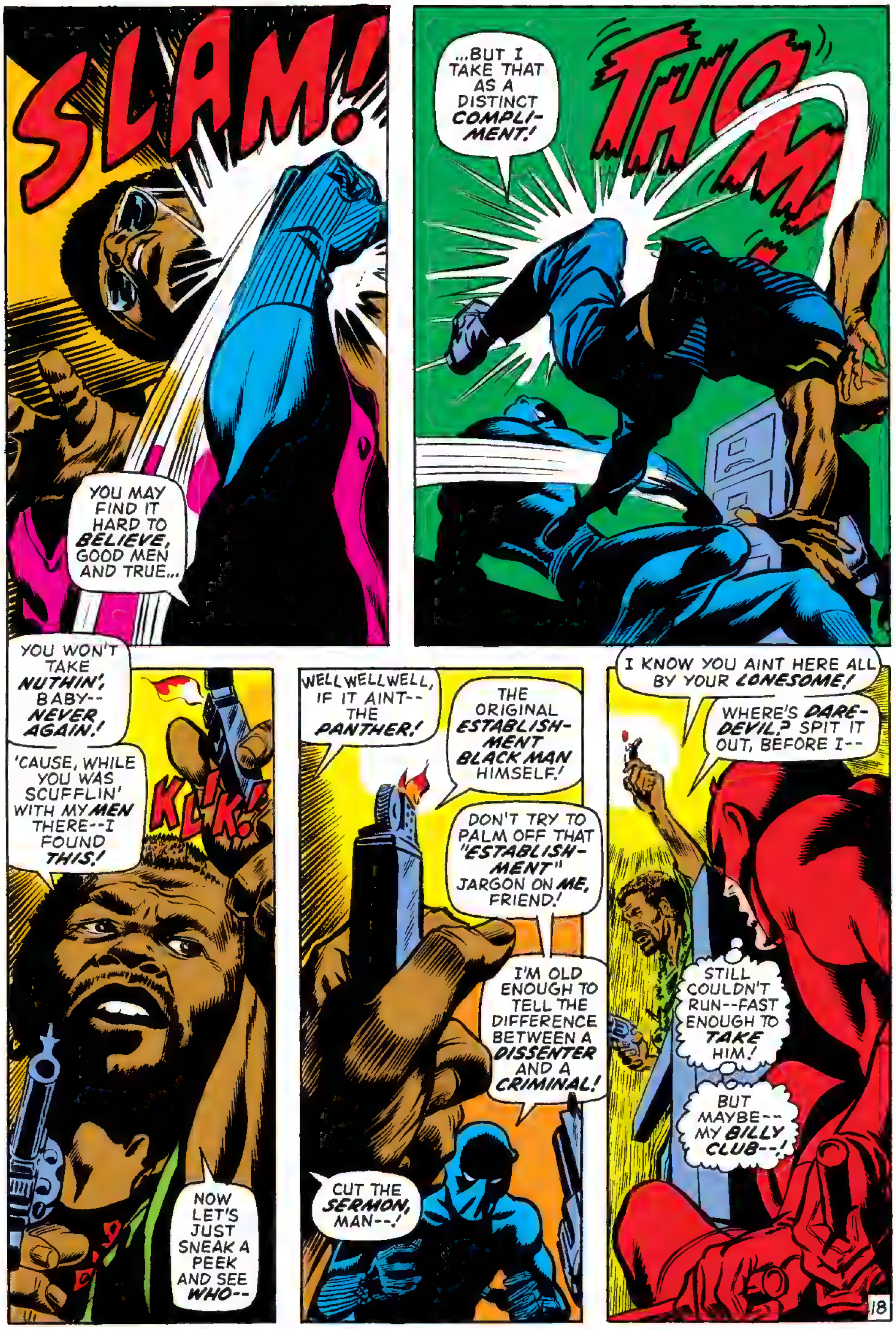


NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW!
LONNIE... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
THEN... THAT'S WHAT MADE LONNIE LOSE THE WILL TO LIVE?
OF COURSE! IT'S THE ONLY POSSIBLE ANSWER!
BILLY... WHY'D YOU JOIN THE 'BOLTS? WHY, BILLY... WHY...?
HE IDOLIZES HIS BROTHER...AND IT SEEMS BILLY CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT JOINING THAT GANG!
SO LONNIE FOLLOWED SUIT... BUT HIS HEART WASN'T IN IT!
I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW YOUR DRIFT, MASKED MAN!
I JUST KNOW THAT, IN HIS PRESENT MENTAL CONDITION...
...THIS LAD WON'T LAST OUT THE NIGHT!
THEN-- THAT LEAVES ME NO CHOICE!
PANTHER-- ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE A CHANCE WITH ME--NO QUESTIONS ASKED?
CAN YOU DOUBT IT, DAREDEVIL?
THEN LET'S MOVE! WE'VE GOT PLACES TO GO!
...ANOTHER FEW BLOCKS, AND WE'RE THERE!
DD...I KNOW I PROMISED NO QUESTIONS...
BUT I HAVE NEVER COMPREHENDED HOW A BLIND ATTORNEY CAN BATTLE CRIME WITH THE BEST OF THEM!
--IF YOU TRULY ARE BLIND, THAT IS!
I AM...BUT I'VE GOT SOME OTHER SUPER-SENSES THAT JUST WON'T QUIT!
REMIND ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT 'EM SOME-TIME!
RIGHT NOW... HERE WE ARE!
SOME SORT OF WAREHOUSE? BUT--WHAT COULD BE INSIDE IT THAT CAN SAVE LONNIE'S LIFE?

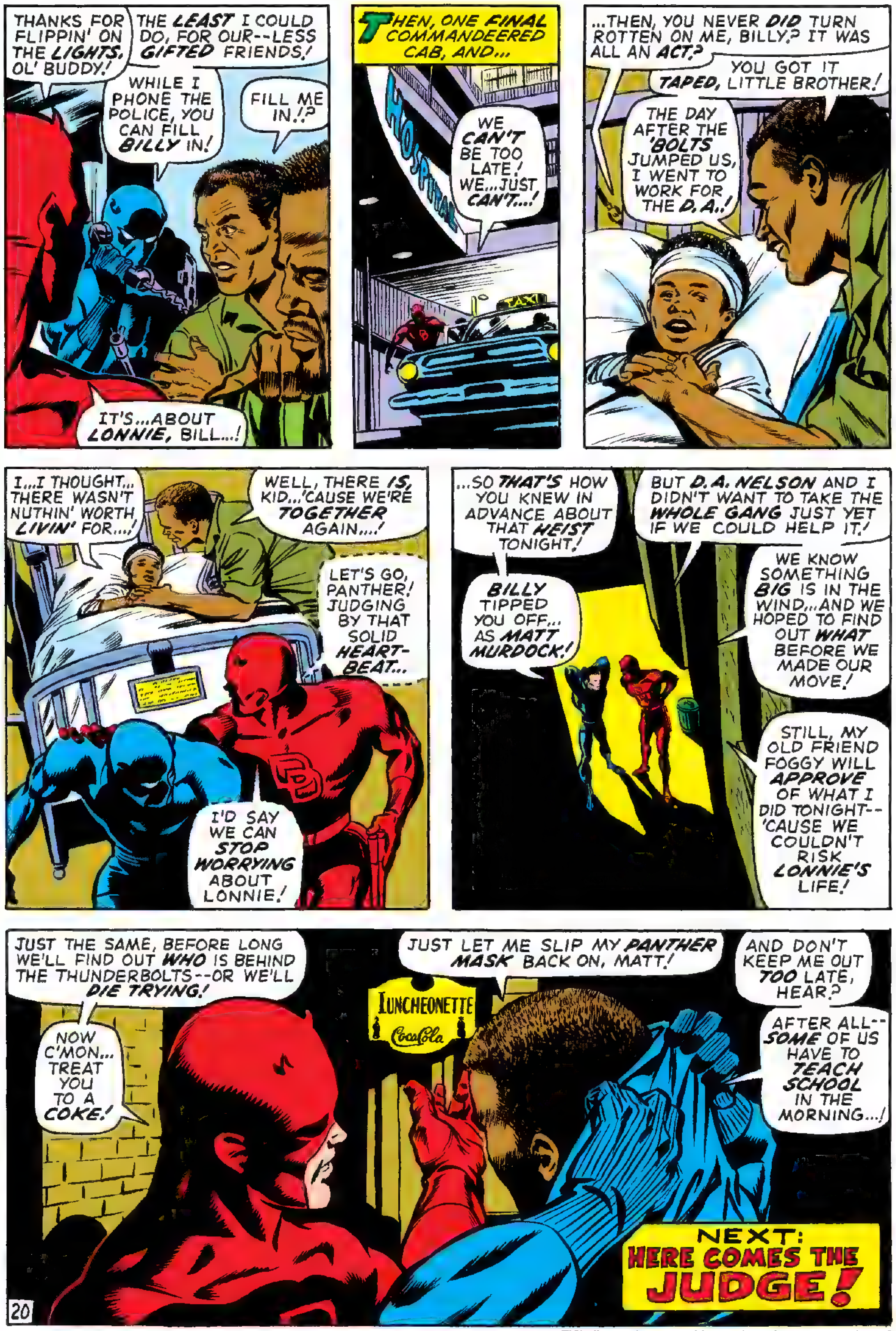
WHAT INDEED, T'CHALLA, EXCEPT--
BILLY!
YOU GOT THE STOMACH FOR KNOCKIN' OVER THAT ARMORY TONIGHT?
YOU KNOW IT, MAN!
BUT WHEN DO I MEET THE REAL MR. BIG-- THE ONE WHO'S BACKIN' YOU CATS?
DON'T PUSH IT, MAN!
YOU JUST BETTER BELIEVE HE'S GOT SOMETHIN' PLANNED FOR LATER...
...THAT'LL MAKE ALL OUR JOBS UP TILL NOW LOOK LIKE SO MUCH PLAYIN' WITH SAND!
FUSE
HEY! THE LIGHTS! IF THIS IS SOMEBODY'S IDEA OF HORSIN' AROUND--!
WHO DOUSED 'EM? SOUND OFF, BEFORE I--
I TURNED THEM OFF, FELLA--
--THE BETTER NOT TO SEE YOU WITH!
15

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, MY FRIEND!
THE WAY DAREDEVIL MOVES IN THE DARK-- EVEN MORE SURELY THAN I CAN--
THE SENSES HE MENTIONED MUST TRULY BE BEYOND ALL BELIEF!
UNNHH!-- LOOK OUT, YOU CATS! THERE'S TWO OF 'EM--!
THAT COULD BE TRUE! THEN AGAIN, THERE MIGHT BE THREE OF US--OR EVEN FOUR!
BRAKKA-BRAKKA
OR MAYBE ONE WOULD BE ENOUGH--WHILE YOU CREEPS ARE PLAYING BLIND MAN'S BLUFF!
FACT IS, DARKNESS IS THE ONLY TRUMP-CARD WE'VE GOT!
OTHERWISE--THE PANTHER AND I ARE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED!
HMMM... REINFORCEMENTS FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER!
YOU 'BOLTS ARE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMIES!
I GOT 'IM, LEADER-MAN! I--
MMFFF!
I DON'T KNOW WHO'S IN HERE WITH US-- OR HOW YOU CAN TELL WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN WHEN WE CAN'T--
BUT YOU GOTTA GO, BABY--AND I'LL SEE TO IT THAT THEY CART YOU AWAY IN A BOX--
--IF I GOTTA FILL EVERYBODY IN THE ROOM WITH LEAD!!
KBAM! KBAM!

THAT LAST SHOT MISSED ME BY INCHES!
BUT-- BLAST IT-- I TWISTED MY ANKLE, EVADING IT!
KPWING!
DD--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HUH? DAREDEVIL? IS HE IN ON THIS?
DON'T SWEAT IT, LEADER-MAN!
YOU TAKE CARE OF DAREDEVIL-- WE GOT THIS ONE!
HAVE WE EVER!!
I WAS CARELESS! THESE TWO LOCATED ME-- WHEN I CRIED OUT!
WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BIG MAN--
BUT, IF YOU'RE PALLIN' AROUND WITH THAT DAREDEVIL CAT--
--YOU AINT NO BROTHER OF THE THUNDER-BOLTS!
17


SLAM!
YOU MAY FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE, GOOD MEN AND TRUE...
...BUT I TAKE THAT AS A DISTINCT COMPLI-MENT!
THOM
YOU WON'T TAKE NUTHIN', BABY-- NEVER AGAIN!
'CAUSE, WHILE YOU WAS SCUFFLIN' WITH MY MEN THERE--I FOUND THIS!
KLIK!
NOW LET'S JUST SNEAK A PEEK AND SEE WHO--
WELL WELL WELL, IF IT AINT-- THE PANTHER!
THE ORIGINAL ESTABLISH-MENT BLACK MAN HIMSELF!
DON'T TRY TO PALM OFF THAT "ESTABLISH-MENT" JARGON ON ME, FRIEND!
I'M OLD ENOUGH TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DISSENTER AND A CRIMINAL!
CUT THE SERMON, MAN--!
I KNOW YOU AINT HERE ALL BY YOUR LONESOME!
WHERE'S DARE-DEVIL? SPIT IT OUT, BEFORE I--
STILL COULDN'T RUN--FAST ENOUGH TO TAKE HIM!
BUT MAYBE-- MY BILLY CLUB--!
18

WAIT A MINUTE! RIGHT NEXT TO ME--
THE SOUND OF A SAFETY CATCH BEING UNLOCKED!
CLICK
AND--I'M BETTING I KNOW WHO'S ON THE BUSINESS END OF THAT CARBINE!
BROTHER BILLY!!
OKAY, LEADER-MAN--REACH FOR IT!
WHA--?
I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, BILLY!
SWAK!
YEEOW!
SO YOU'RE THE PIG, HUH, BILLY-BOY?
WELL, IF THEY GOT ANY MEDALS FOR YOU--THEY CAN PIN 'EM ON YOUR CASKET!
WHERE DO YOU DIG UP THOSE LINES, FELLA? THE LATE, LATE SHOW?
BILLY--YOU OKAY, GUY?
BELIEVE IT, DD!
JUST A FLESH WOUND--NOTHING A BAND AID WON'T TAKE CARE OF!
HEY! THERE GO THE LIGHTS!
YOU! WE SHOULD'A KNOWN!
BUT YOU DIDN'T, MAN--AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS!
19



T'Challa continues teaching and serving as a member of the Avengers, but soon finds himself longing for Wakanda...

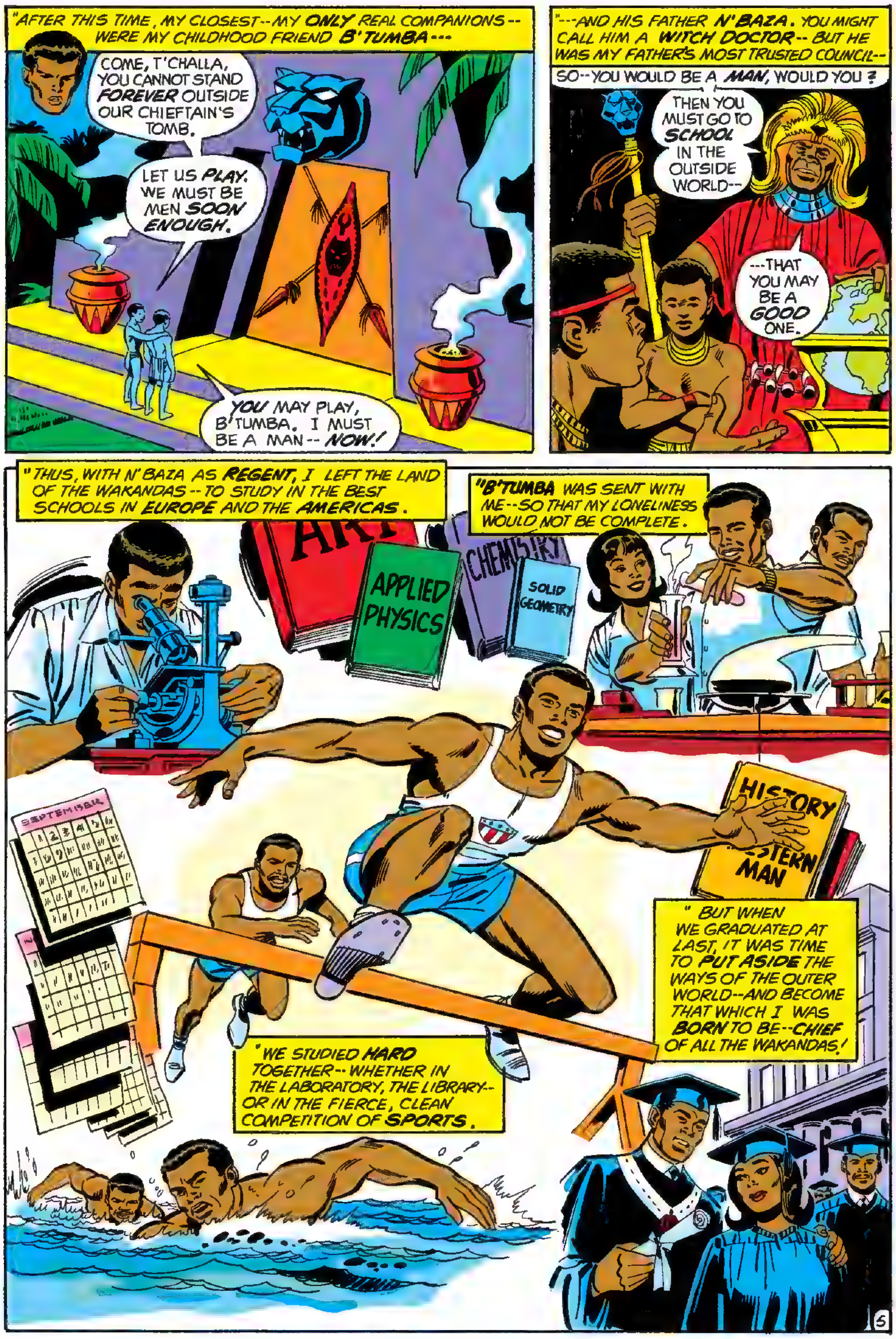
AVENGERS
15¢
87
APR
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
REVEALED AT LAST! THE ORIGIN OF T'CHALLA!
LOOK HOMEWARD, AVENGER!

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®
LOOK HOMEWARD, AVENGER!
WE ARE HOME-- BACK FROM THE PARALLEL EARTH OF THE SQUADRON SUPREME-- AND OUR PLANET SEEMS AS PEACE-FUL AS IT GETS THESE DAYS.
AND YET-- HOW LONG BEFORE SOME NEW MENACE ARISES-- TO THREATEN AN ALREADY TROUBLED WORLD?
YOU'RE TOO MORBID, VISION. THIS IS A TIME FOR REJOICING!
YEAH, VIZH. I KNOW THAT EVEN AN ANDROID CAN CRY-- BUT CAN'T THEY YOK IT UP A LITTLE, TOO?
TEA IS SERVED, GENTLEMEN-- AND MISS WANDA.
STAN LEE EDITOR
ROY THOMAS WRITER
FRANK GIACOIA and SAL BUSCEMA ARTISTS
MIKE STEVENS LETTERER

SPEAKING OF MORBIDITY, T'CHALLA-- WHICH NOBODY WAS--
I KNOW IT'S NOT EXACTLY A CRIME TO WALK AROUND WITHOUT A WALL-TO-WALL SMILE--
BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO PUT A GRIN ON THAT LONG FACE OF YOURS--
NOTHING, IRON MAN-- BUT THANKS.
I GUESS I'M JUST SUFFERING FROM A MALADY THAT HITS US ALL, SOONER OR LATER.
A LITTLE BUG CALLED-- HOME-SICKNESS.
YOU'RE HOMESICK-- FOR THAT JUNGLE VERSION OF DISNEYLAND YOU HAIL FROM ?
IF I'D HAVE KNOWN, I'D HAVE BOUGHT YOU A PET TSE-TSE FLY TO PERK YOU UP.
LONELINESS -- THE LONGING FOR DISTANT FRIENDS--CAN STRIKE AT ANY UNWARY HEART, GOLIATH--
--AS THOR WELL KNOWS, WHO HATH DWELT AMONG THE SHIMMERING SPIRES OF ETERNAL ASGARD.
BUT PERHAPS--THERE ARE WORSE THINGS THAN LONELINESS, AVENGER.
WHAT OF ONE WHO HAS NEVER HAD A HOME TO MISS--OR TRUE EMOTIONS TO FEEL?
I, UH, DON'T MEAN TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT-- BUT PIETRO AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN TO YOUR AFRICAN KINGDOM, T'CHALLA.
YES--- COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT IT?
HMMM--- I SUSPECT THAT THE VISION AND I ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF A MILD DOSE OF MUTANT PSYCHOLOGY. BUT---
THANK YOU, JARVIS.
--BUT PERHAPS I DO NEED TO TALK A BIT ABOUT HOME--
--ABOUT DAYS LONG FORGOTTEN-- ABOUT NIGHTS LOST IN TIME'S SHADOW--
---AND ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF ONE WHOM THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAS CALLED--- THE PANTHER!
2

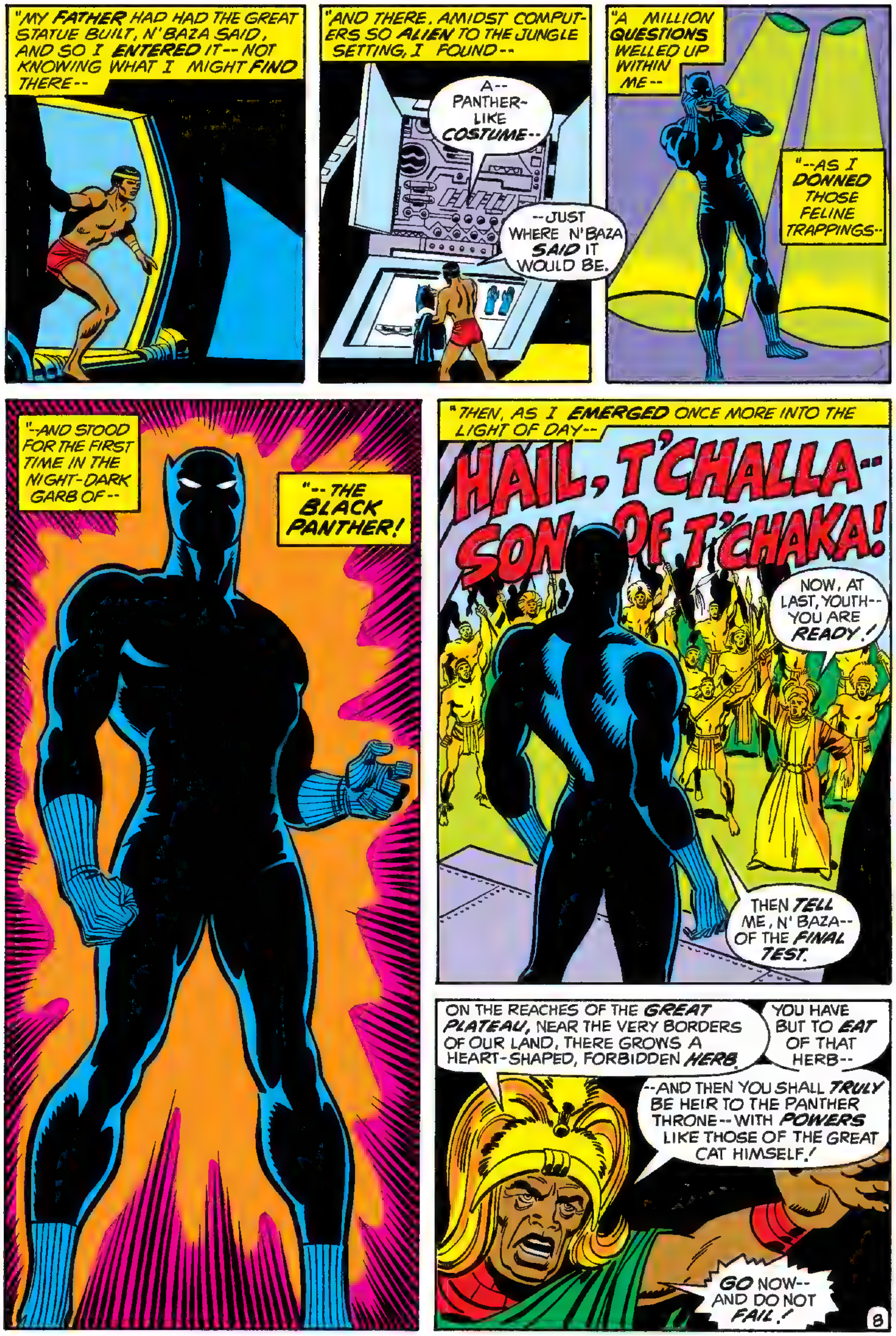
"SOME OF MY STORY IS KNOWN TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR, WHO WERE THE FIRST OUTSIDERS TO VISIT MY HOMELAND. I TOLD THEM OF OUR HIDDEN JUNGLE -- ONE OF THE LAST UNEXPLORED POCKETS ON THE ONCE-DARK CONTINENT -- AND OF MY FATHER T'CHAKA, CHIEF OF ALL THE WAKANDAS---
ONE DAY, MY FATHER, I TOO SHALL BE CHIEFTAIN.
AND I SHALL BE WORTHY OF ALL YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME.
BUT NOW, IT IS BEDTIME FOR THE LITTLEST CHIEFTAIN OF ALL.
"HE WAS A GREAT MAN, MY FATHER--WISE IN COUNCIL, JUST IN JUDGMENT, AND BRAVE IN BATTLE.
"WHEREVER THERE WAS DANGER, THERE TOO WAS T'CHAKA-- ALWAYS IN THE FOREFRONT.
"BUT THE MOST FORMIDABLE OF ALL HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHIEFTAIN WAS THE STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TRIBE'S MOST PRIZED POSSESSION--
ALL HAIL T'CHAKA--
GUARDIAN OF THE ETERNAL PEAK!
3

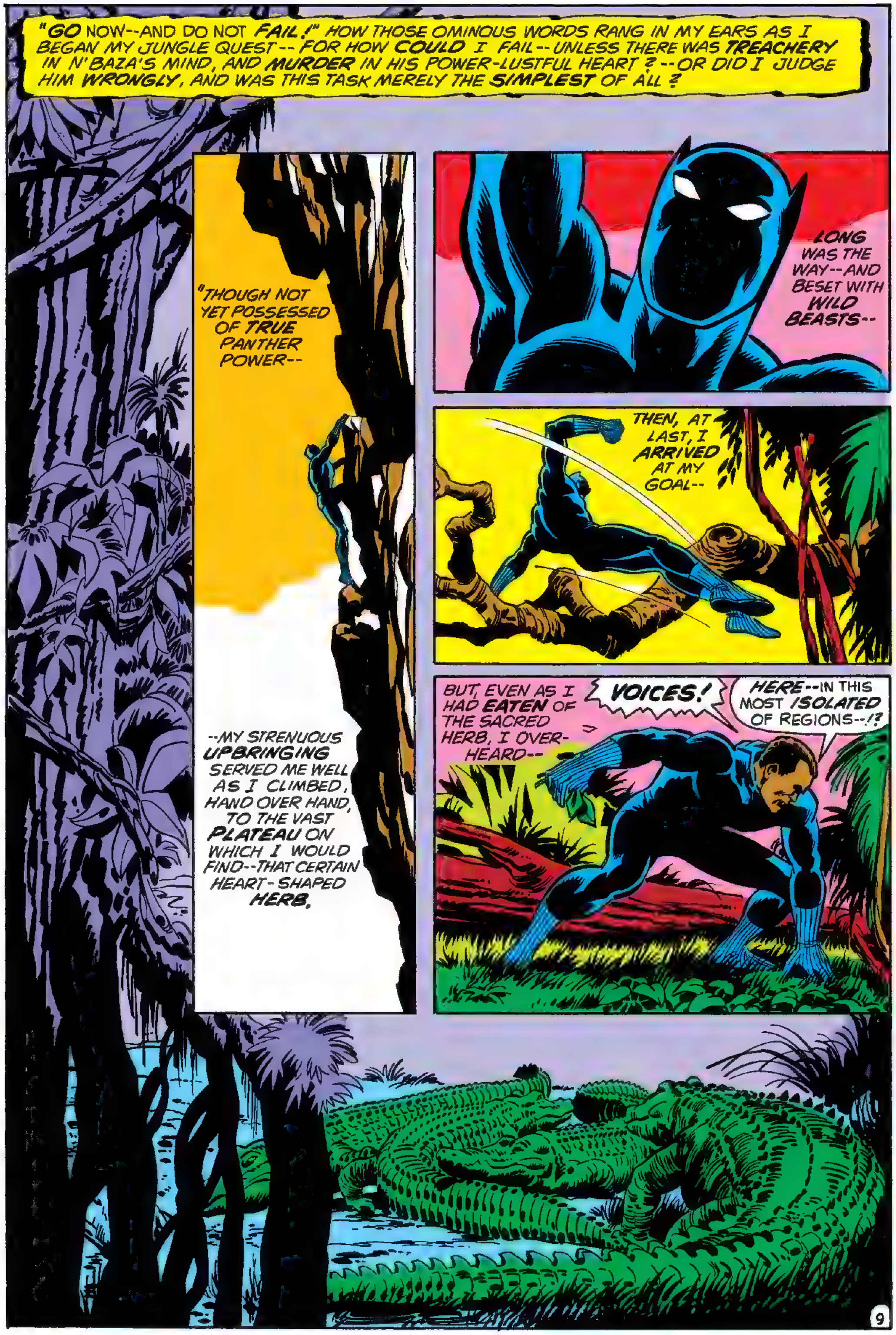
"THE ETERNAL PEAK! THAT SACRED MOUND WHICH HAS BORDERED THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME!
COME, MY SON. THIS DAY YOU MUST LEARN OUR TRIBE'S DEEPEST SECRET.
YONDER FLAME HAS BEEN BURNING SINCE THE DAY YOU WERE BORN.
IT IS MADE OF METAL TAKEN FROM THE SACRED MOUND-- THE METAL CALLED VIBRANIUM.
SEE HOW COOL IT IS TO THE TOUCH--- HOW IT ABSORBS HEAT, SOUND-- ALL VIBRATIONS.
OUR STORE OF THIS METAL IS PRECIOUS BEYOND BELIEF TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE--
--AND, AS CHIEFTAIN, I MUST GUARD IT WITH MY LIFE.
"THE DEADLY IRONY OF MY FATHER'S WORDS STILL RINGS IN MY EARS. FOR, IT WAS NOT LONG AFTERWARD THAT THE MAN NAMED KLAW CAME TO OUR LAND.
" KLAW-- THE MASTER OF SOUND-- THE EVIL ONE WHO POSSESSED A WEAPON THE LIKE OF WHICH NO MAN HAD EVER BEFORE SEEN-- A WEAPON THAT COULD CONVERT SOUND INTO MASS.
VIBRANIUM-- THE ONE ELEMENT I NEED TO POWER MY SOUND TRANSFORMER--
--SO THAT I MAY CHANGE THE BASIC ENERGY OF SOUND INTO ANY LIVING FORM I DESIRE!
"BUT, MY FATHER SAW THE EVIL IN THIS MAN'S HEART-- AND STOOD UP BEFORE HIM--
BEGONE! THIS LAND IS OURS--SO SPEAKS T'CHAKA.
THEN-- T'CHAKA SHALL SPEAK NO MORE!
"I STILL REMEMBER THAT DEAFENING BURST OF GUNFIRE-- THE FIRST I EVER HEARD--
KRAK! KRAK!
"--HOW IT CUT DOWN MY FATHER IN THE PRIME OF HIS MANHOOD-- AND HOW A BOY BECAME A MAN THAT DAY!
I SHALL AVENGE YOU, FATHER! KLAW SHALL PAY!
THIS T'CHALLA VOWS!
4


"AFTER THIS TIME, MY CLOSEST--MY ONLY REAL COMPANIONS--WERE MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND B'TUMBA---
COME, T'CHALLA, YOU CANNOT STAND FOREVER OUTSIDE OUR CHIEFTAIN'S TOMB.
LET US PLAY. WE MUST BE MEN SOON ENOUGH.
YOU MAY PLAY, B'TUMBA. I MUST BE A MAN--NOW!
"---AND HIS FATHER N'BAZA. YOU MIGHT CALL HIM A WITCH DOCTOR--BUT HE WAS MY FATHER'S MOST TRUSTED COUNCIL--
SO--YOU WOULD BE A MAN, WOULD YOU?
THEN YOU MUST GO TO SCHOOL IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD--
---THAT YOU MAY BE A GOOD ONE.
"THUS, WITH N'BAZA AS REGENT, I LEFT THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS--TO STUDY IN THE BEST SCHOOLS IN EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS.
"B'TUMBA WAS SENT WITH ME--SO THAT MY LONELINESS WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE.
ART
APPLIED PHYSICS
CHEMISTRY
SOLID GEOMETRY
SEPTEMBER
HISTORY
MAN
"BUT WHEN WE GRADUATED AT LAST, IT WAS TIME TO PUT ASIDE THE WAYS OF THE OUTER WORLD--AND BECOME THAT WHICH I WAS BORN TO BE--CHIEF OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!
"WE STUDIED HARD TOGETHER--WHETHER IN THE LABORATORY, THE LIBRARY--OR IN THE FIERCE, CLEAN COMPETITION OF SPORTS.
5

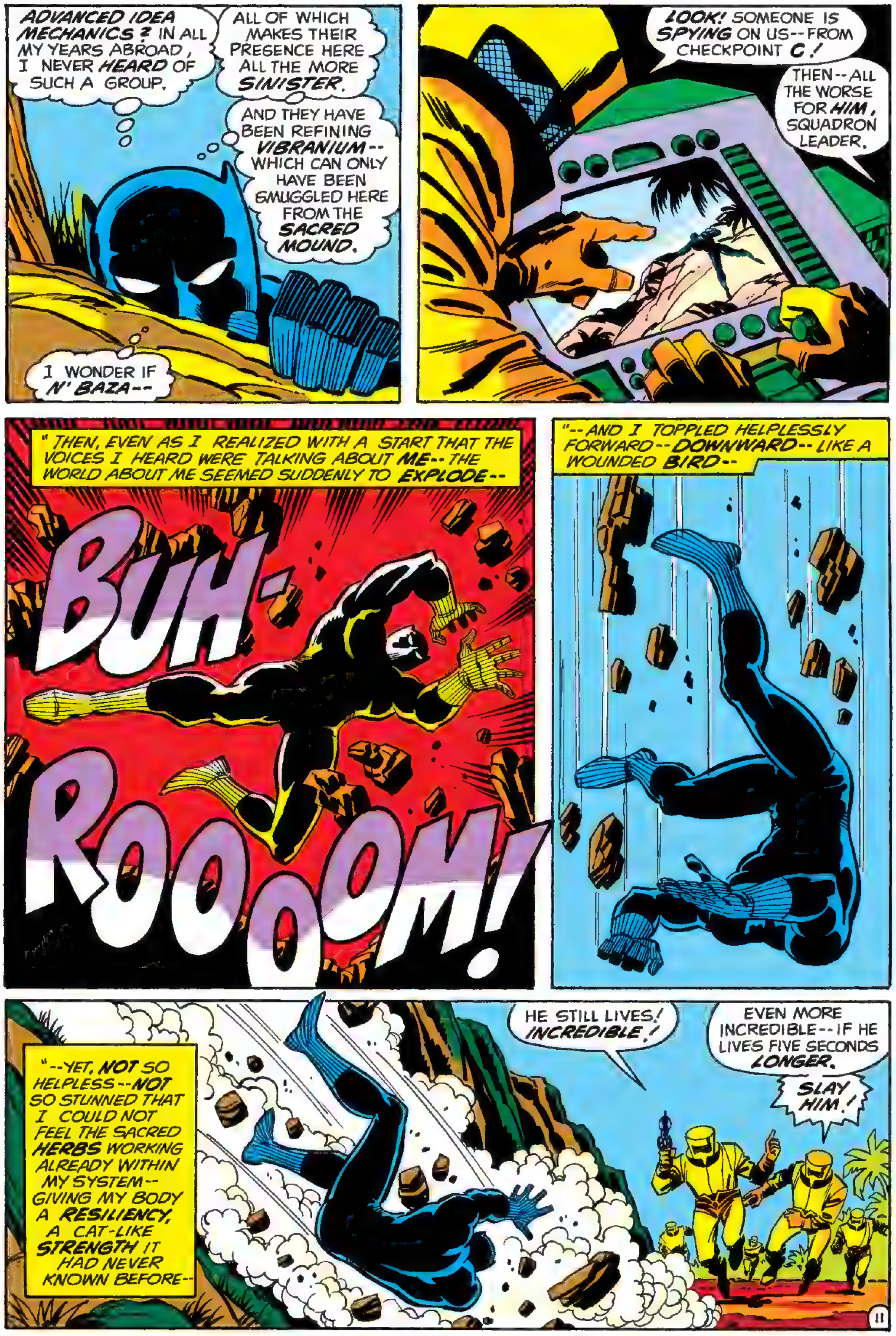
"YET ALWAYS OVER THE YEARS, A NAGGING SUSPICION DOGGED MY TRACKS--HAUNTED MY MOMENTS OF REVERIE--
"--THE SUSPICION THAT N'BAZA HAD SIMPLY WISHED TO BE RID OF ME FOR YEARS--WHILE CONSOLIDATING HIS OWN POSITION OF POWER--
" AND INDEED, ON THE DAY OF MY HOMECOMING--
ALL HAIL T'CHALLA--
--SON OF T'CHAKA, AND GUARDIAN OF THE SACRED MOUND.!
HAIL! HAIL!
YOU HAVE STUDIED LONG AND WELL, T'CHALLA--AND IT WOULD SEEM THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP IS TO BE YOURS THIS DAY.
BUT, YOU MUST PASS TWO FINAL TESTS PROVIDED FOR BY YOUR FATHER--
FIRST, YOU MUST DEFEAT HALF A DOZEN OF OUR FINEST WARRIORS--IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.!
I KNEW NOTHING OF THIS TEST--BUT I STAND READY.
"N'BAZA HAD NOT MADE MATTERS SIMPLE FOR ME. THE WARRIORS CHOSEN TO BATTLE ME WERE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANY SINGLE MAN--
"BUT, THE BLOOD OF T'CHAKA--AND THE DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE--THROBBED BENEATH MY TEMPLES--
"AND SO --
" I TRIUMPHED!
6

YOU HAVE DONE WELL, T'CHALLA. ONLY ONE TEST REMAINS!
AND WHAT IS THAT, N'BAZA?
YOU SHALL LEARN OF IT ON THE MORROW.
BUT FIRST--
--YOU MUST PASS A NIGHT OF VIGIL, IN THE TEMPLE OF THE PANTHER-GOD!
ONLY THEN SHALL YOU BE CLEANSED--AND WORTHY TO BEGIN THE FINAL TEST OF KINGSHIP.
THEN, BECAUSE YOU SAY IT WAS MY FATHER'S WILL--
I SHALL DO AS YOU DEMAND.
"THAT DARK NIGHT PASSED ON SLOW, LEADEN FEET--AND ALL THRU IT, MY HEART WAS FILLED WITH DEEP SUSPICIONS-- AND BLACK FOREBODINGS--
"WHEN DAYBREAK CAME AT LAST, I LEARNED N'BAZA HAD SENT B'TUMBA AWAY--PERHAPS THAT I MIGHT HAVE NO CHAMPIONS AMONG MY OWN PEOPLE. STILL--
I AM READY, WITCH DOCTOR!
THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS WAS NOT THEN AS SOME OF YOU HAVE SEEN IT, AVENGERS. THERE WAS NO MECHANIZED JUNGLE TO SHIELD OUR VILLAGE FROM PRYING EYES--YET, AS N'BAZA'S STAFF STRUCK A CERTAIN SPOT, A GIGANTIC CARVEN FIGURE ROSE FROM A HIDDEN SILO--
BY THE FIRST LION OF MY FATHER!
7

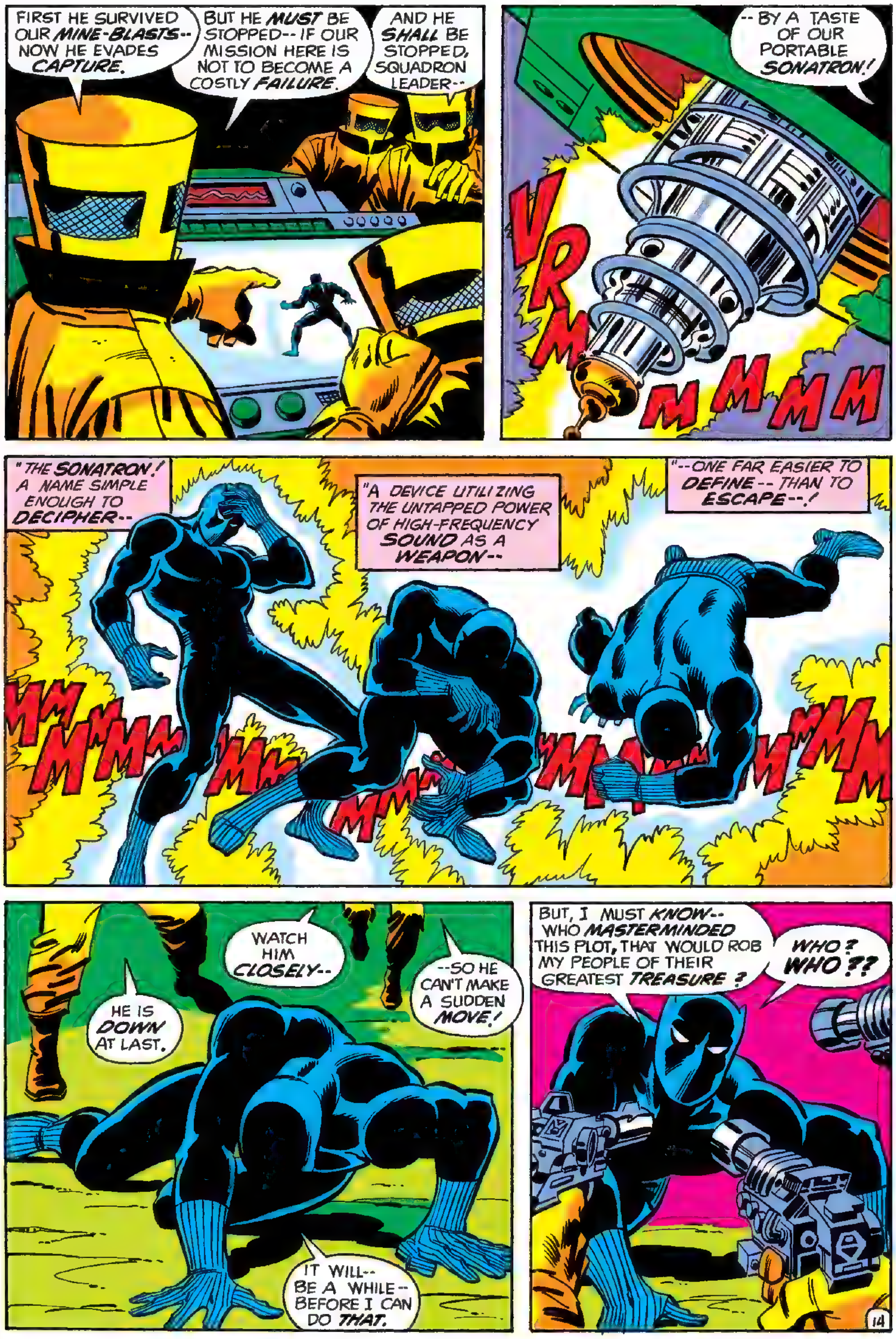

"MY FATHER HAD HAD THE GREAT STATUE BUILT, N'BAZA SAID, AND SO I ENTERED IT--NOT KNOWING WHAT I MIGHT FIND THERE--
"AND THERE, AMIDST COMPUTERS SO ALIEN TO THE JUNGLE SETTING, I FOUND--
A--PANTHER-LIKE COSTUME--
--JUST WHERE N'BAZA SAID IT WOULD BE.
"A MILLION QUESTIONS WELLED UP WITHIN ME--
"--AS I DONNED THOSE FELINE TRAPPINGS--
"--AND STOOD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NIGHT-DARK GARB OF--
"--THE BLACK PANTHER!
"THEN, AS I EMERGED ONCE MORE INTO THE LIGHT OF DAY--
HAIL, T'CHALLA--SON OF T'CHAKA!
NOW, AT LAST, YOUTH--YOU ARE READY!
THEN TELL ME, N'BAZA--OF THE FINAL TEST.
ON THE REACHES OF THE GREAT PLATEAU, NEAR THE VERY BORDERS OF OUR LAND, THERE GROWS A HEART-SHAPED, FORBIDDEN HERB.
YOU HAVE BUT TO EAT OF THAT HERB--
--AND THEN YOU SHALL TRULY BE HEIR TO THE PANTHER THRONE--WITH POWERS LIKE THOSE OF THE GREAT CAT HIMSELF!
GO NOW--AND DO NOT FAIL!
8

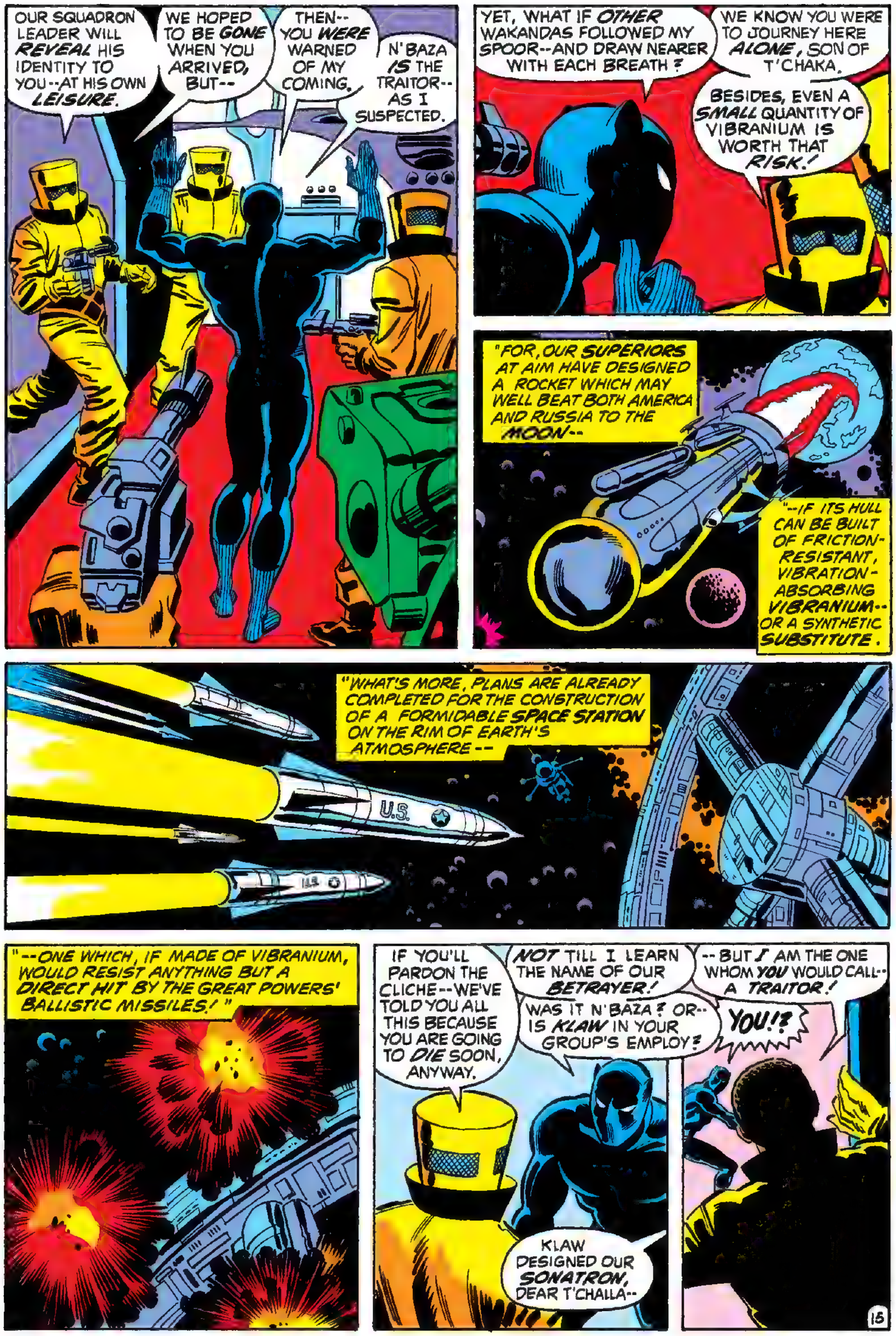

"GO NOW--AND DO NOT FAIL!" HOW THOSE OMINOUS WORDS RANG IN MY EARS AS I BEGAN MY JUNGLE QUEST-- FOR HOW COULD I FAIL--UNLESS THERE WAS TREACHERY IN N'BAZA'S MIND, AND MURDER IN HIS POWER-LUSTFUL HEART? --OR DID I JUDGE HIM WRONGLY, AND WAS THIS TASK MERELY THE SIMPLEST OF ALL?
"THOUGH NOT YET POSSESSED OF TRUE PANTHER POWER--
--MY STRENUOUS UPBRINGING SERVED ME WELL AS I CLIMBED, HAND OVER HAND, TO THE VAST PLATEAU ON WHICH I WOULD FIND--THAT CERTAIN HEART-SHAPED HERB.
LONG WAS THE WAY--AND BESET WITH WILD BEASTS--
THEN, AT LAST, I ARRIVED AT MY GOAL--
BUT, EVEN AS I HAD EATEN OF THE SACRED HERB, I OVER-HEARD--
VOICES!
HERE--IN THIS MOST ISOLATED OF REGIONS--!?
9

"THE SIGHT I SAW NEXT, AS I STOLE TO THE EDGE OF A CLEARING, WAS ONE THAT BELONGED IN A SCIENCE-FICTION FILM, RATHER THAN THE JUNGLE. A SMALL, FUTURISTIC REFINERY OF SOME SORT-- IN IT, HALF A DOZEN HOODED, UNIFORMED MEN -- AND BEYOND IT, A CRAFT SUCH AS I HAD NEVER SEEN--
HURRY, YOU FOOLS! YOUR WORK HERE IS DONE.
LOAD THE REFINED VIBRANIUM ON THE SHIP-- AND YOU SHALL DEPART FOR AIM HEADQUARTERS.
IT CANNOT BE TOO SOON FOR US, SQUADRON LEADER.
OUR ACRONYM-TITLE MAY STAND FOR ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS--
BUT SOME OF US STILL WISH WE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO WESTERN EUROPE OR THE U.S.-- NOT THE HEART OF AFRICA!


ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS? IN ALL MY YEARS ABROAD, I NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A GROUP.
ALL OF WHICH MAKES THEIR PRESENCE HERE ALL THE MORE SINISTER.
AND THEY HAVE BEEN REFINING VIBRANIUM-- WHICH CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN SMUGGLED HERE FROM THE SACRED MOUND.
I WONDER IF N'BAZA--
LOOK! SOMEONE IS SPYING ON US--FROM CHECKPOINT C!
THEN--ALL THE WORSE FOR HIM, SQUADRON LEADER.
"THEN, EVEN AS I REALIZED WITH A START THAT THE VOICES I HEARD WERE TALKING ABOUT ME--THE WORLD ABOUT ME SEEMED SUDDENLY TO EXPLODE--
BUH-ROOOOM!
"--AND I TOPPLED HELPLESSLY FORWARD--DOWNWARD--LIKE A WOUNDED BIRD--
"--YET, NOT SO HELPLESS--NOT SO STUNNED THAT I COULD NOT FEEL THE SACRED HERBS WORKING ALREADY WITHIN MY SYSTEM--GIVING MY BODY A RESILIENCY, A CAT-LIKE STRENGTH IT HAD NEVER KNOWN BEFORE--
HE STILL LIVES! INCREDIBLE!
EVEN MORE INCREDIBLE--IF HE LIVES FIVE SECONDS LONGER.
SLAY HIM!
11

PERHAPS YOU WILL SLAY ME -- AND SECURE A TYRANT'S SHAKY THRONE--
--BUT NOT BEFORE I LEARN THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS WHICH SEAR MY HEART LIKE A TORCH.
UHNNN
12
WHO ARE YOU--AND THE STRANGELY-NAMED GROUP WHICH EMPLOYS YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING THE VIBRANIUM--AND TO WHAT EVIL PURPOSE?
AND, ABOVE ALL ELSE--
WHO IS THE WAKANDA TRAITOR WHO ALONE COULD HAVE INFORMED YOU OF VIBRANIUM?
WHO?
HERE IS YOUR ONLY ANSWER, SWINE--A SWIFT DEATH!
MISSED! IMPOSSIBLE!
SO I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT--
--UNTIL I PARTOOK OF A CERTAIN HERB!
13


FIRST HE SURVIVED OUR MINE-BLASTS-- NOW HE EVADES CAPTURE.
BUT HE MUST BE STOPPED-- IF OUR MISSION HERE IS NOT TO BECOME A COSTLY FAILURE.
AND HE SHALL BE STOPPED, SQUADRON LEADER--
--BY A TASTE OF OUR PORTABLE SONATRON!
VRMMMMMM
"THE SONATRON! A NAME SIMPLE ENOUGH TO DECIPHER--
"A DEVICE UTILIZING THE UNTAPPED POWER OF HIGH-FREQUENCY SOUND AS A WEAPON--
"--ONE FAR EASIER TO DEFINE -- THAN TO ESCAPE--!
HE IS DOWN AT LAST.
WATCH HIM CLOSELY--
--SO HE CAN'T MAKE A SUDDEN MOVE!
IT WILL-- BE A WHILE-- BEFORE I CAN DO THAT.
BUT, I MUST KNOW-- WHO MASTERMINDED THIS PLOT, THAT WOULD ROB MY PEOPLE OF THEIR GREATEST TREASURE?
WHO? WHO??
14



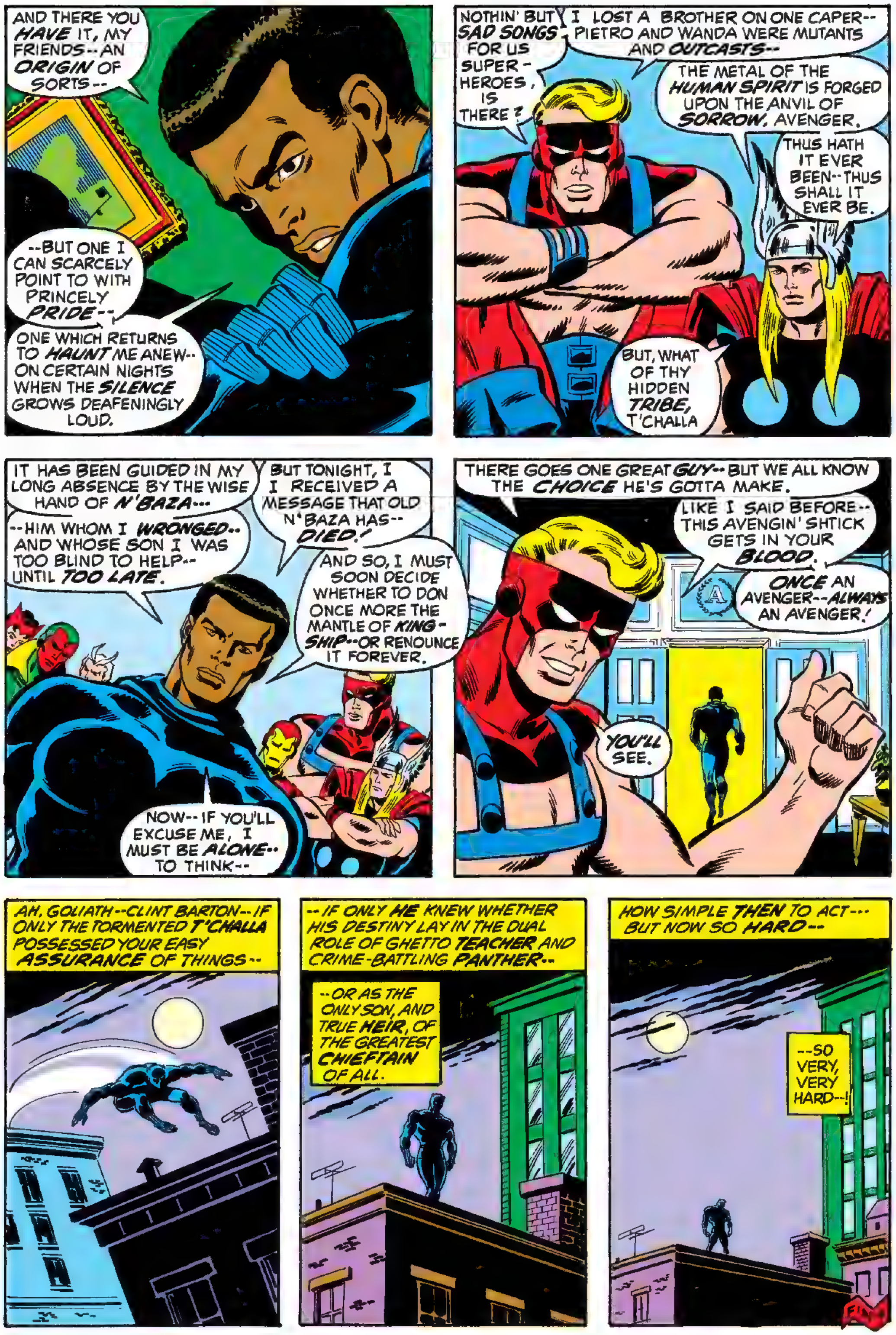
OUR SQUADRON LEADER WILL REVEAL HIS IDENTITY TO YOU--AT HIS OWN LEISURE.
WE HOPED TO BE GONE WHEN YOU ARRIVED, BUT--
THEN--YOU WERE WARNED OF MY COMING.
N'BAZA IS THE TRAITOR--AS I SUSPECTED.
YET, WHAT IF OTHER WAKANDAS FOLLOWED MY SPOOR--AND DRAW NEARER WITH EACH BREATH?
WE KNOW YOU WERE TO JOURNEY HERE ALONE, SON OF T'CHAKA.
BESIDES, EVEN A SMALL QUANTITY OF VIBRANIUM IS WORTH THAT RISK!
"FOR, OUR SUPERIORS AT AIM HAVE DESIGNED A ROCKET WHICH MAY WELL BEAT BOTH AMERICA AND RUSSIA TO THE MOON--
"--IF ITS HULL CAN BE BUILT OF FRICTION-RESISTANT, VIBRATION-ABSORBING VIBRANIUM--OR A SYNTHETIC SUBSTITUTE.
"WHAT'S MORE, PLANS ARE ALREADY COMPLETED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FORMIDABLE SPACE STATION ON THE RIM OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE--
U.S.
"--ONE WHICH, IF MADE OF VIBRANIUM, WOULD RESIST ANYTHING BUT A DIRECT HIT BY THE GREAT POWERS' BALLISTIC MISSILES!"
IF YOU'LL PARDON THE CLICHE--WE'VE TOLD YOU ALL THIS BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO DIE SOON, ANYWAY.
NOT TILL I LEARN THE NAME OF OUR BETRAYER!
WAS IT N'BAZA? OR--IS KLAW IN YOUR GROUP'S EMPLOY?
KLAW DESIGNED OUR SONATRON, DEAR T'CHALLA--
--BUT I AM THE ONE WHOM YOU WOULD CALL--A TRAITOR!
YOU!?
15

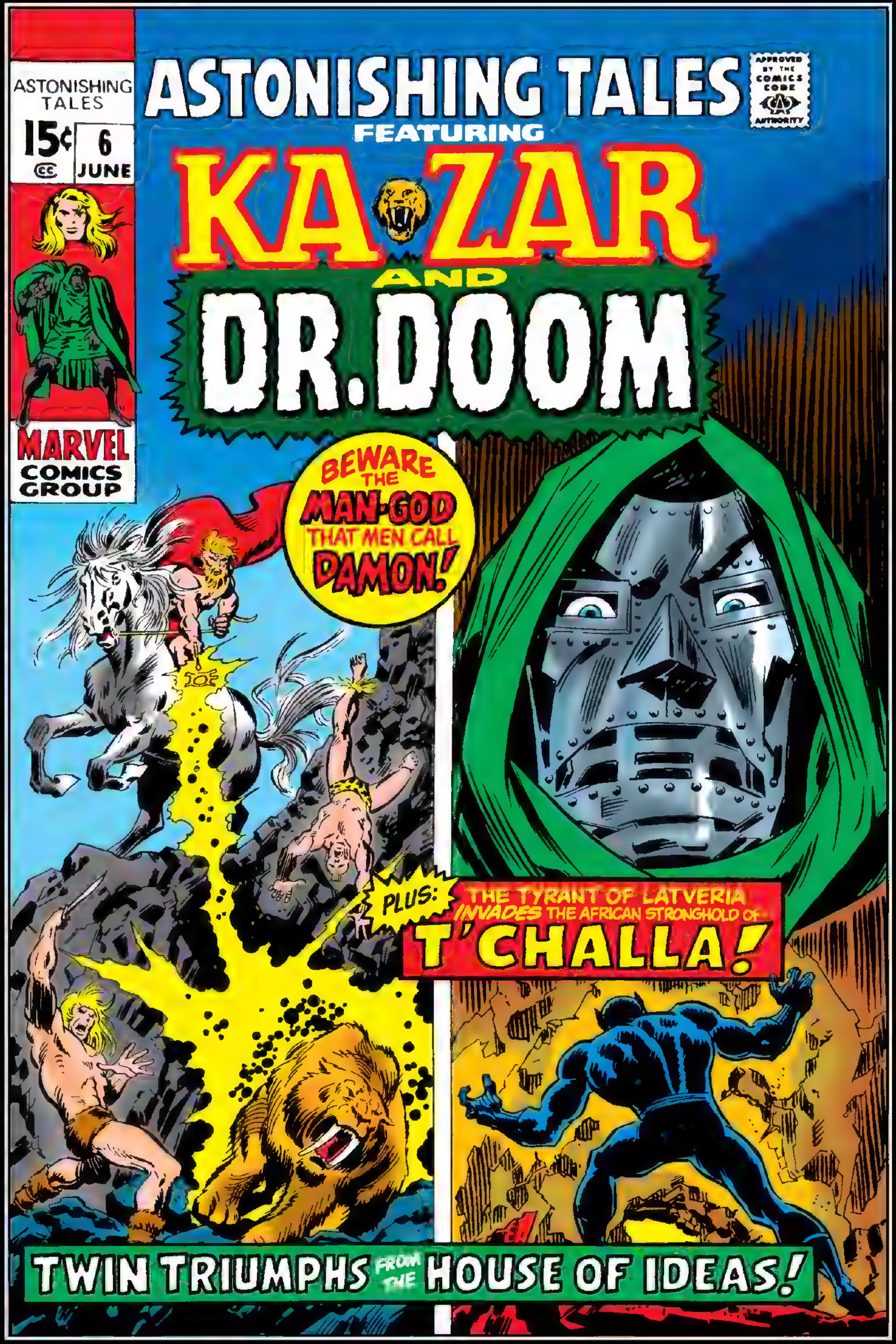
B'TUMBA!
THEN--N'BAZA IS NOT A TURNCOAT?
MY BELOVED FATHER IS A FOOL--TOO SENTIMENTAL, TOO SPINELESS TO GRASP A THRONE--OR TO HOLD IT.
I WAS RECRUITED BY AIM--WHILE STILL YOUR COLLEGE ROOMMATE.
YOU CAN ASK THAT?
YOU, WHO BESTED ME AT EVERY SPORT, EVERY ENDEAVOR? YOU, WHO RECEIVED EVERY HONOR--WHILE MY FATHER FORCED ME TO BE YOUR LACKEY?
BUT NOW YOU'LL PAY--PAY FOR ALL THOSE YEARS I WALKED IN YOUR SHADOW--
YOU'LL PAY!
WHAT--?
AND YOU, B'TUMBA, WILL PAY FOR STEPPING BETWEEN T'CHALLA--AND THE GUNS OF AIM--
--AS WELL AS FOR UNDERRATING THE PANTHER POWERS GIVEN ME BY THOSE HEART-SHAPED HERBS!
BWA
K!
TRULY IMPRESSIVE POWERS, NATIVE SON--
LET US SEE IF THEY HAVE MADE YOU IMMUNE TO A MEDIUM-FREQUENCY STUN BURST.
NO? TOO BAD, PANTHER--TOO BAD INDEED!
OHHH
"IT CAN HAVE BEEN ONLY A FEW MINUTES LATER THAT I AWOKE--MY UNMASKED FACE DASHED BY DEATH-COLD WATER--
OPEN YOUR EYES, DOG!
I WANT TO SEE THE EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE WHEN ONE OF MY MEN BLASTS YOU OUT OF EXISTENCE--
--WITH A LARGER VERSION OF THE WEAPON WHICH ABORTED YOUR FUTILE ATTACK.
16

SHOULD IT REALLY BE ONE OF US WHO TAKES HIS WORTHLESS LIFE, B'TUMBA?
DO YOU NOT WISH THE PLEASURE YOURSELF-- OR ARE YOU TOO SQUEAMISH TO--
WATCH YOURSELF, SWINE!
YES--I WILL KILL HIM MYSELF!
--AFTER YOU GET YOUR HAND OFF MY SHOULDER.
I MEANT NOTHING BY IT, SQUADRON LEADER.
NOTHING AT ALL.
"AND THEN, WE WERE ALONE, B'TUMBA AND I--
ANY LAST WORDS, OLD FRIEND?
IF YOU EXPECTED TO WATCH ME CRINGE--
--THEN YOU'LL DIE LESS HAPPY THAN I!
NO-- I SUPPOSE I DIDN'T, AT THAT.
NOW-- MAKE READY TO DIE, PANTHER!
DID YOU HEAR ME? TO DIE!
THEN PULL THAT TRIGGER, BETRAYER OF THE WAKANDAS.
PULL IT!
PULL IT!
PULL IT!
"AN INSTANT BECAME A MOMENT-- A MOMENT, AN ETERNITY--AND--
HAH!
AS THEY SAY IN AMERICA--AIN'T THAT A KICK IN THE HEAD!
I CAN'T DO IT. I JUST CAN'T DO IT!
"SILENCE--A KNIFE SCRAPING MY BONDS-- THEN--
B'TUMBA--THERE IS MUCH WE MUST TALK ABOUT, YOU AND I---
WHEN THIS BUSINESS IS DONE--OLD FRIEND.
THEN WE CAN SPEAK OF YEARS WASTED--OF AMBITIONS THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN--
--BUT ONLY AFTER A.I.M. HAS PAID THE PRICE FOR TURNING BROTHERLY LOVE INTO SMOULDERING HATRED--
-- FOR TRANSFORMING ONE FOOL'S YOUTHFUL FOLLY-- INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH!
BKOW!
17

IF THEY DO--IT WON'T BE BECAUSE WE PULL A SURPRISE ATTACK.
SOMEONE HAS ATTACHED A MONITORING DEVICE TO YOUR COLLAR.
WHAT? THEN--THAT MEANS--
--THAT YOU HAVE BETRAYED AIM FOR THE FIRST TIME-- AND THE LAST!
DID YOU THINK US STUPID-- THAT WE WOULD TRUST ONE WHO BETRAYED HIS OWN PEOPLE?
ENOUGH TALK, WE WANTED THE VIBRANIUM--AND WE HAVE IT.
WE DO NOT NEED YOU ANY LONGER-- SQUADRON LEADER!
SET BLASTERS FOR LETHAL DOSAGE! READY-- AIM--
YOU KNOW WHAT WE MUST DO, T'CHALLA.
OUR CHANCES ARE SLIM-- BUT WE MUST STRIKE--
--NOW!
"BUT, B'TUMBA WAS SECOND-BEST TO ME-- ONE FINAL TIME--!
FT ZAAK!
"THEN, A RAGE WELLED UP INSIDE ME-- SUCH AS I HAD NEVER KNOWN--
"IT SEEMED TO ME THAT NO LONGER WAS I MERELY T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA--
"BUT RATHER, I WAS INDEED THE JUNGLE BEAST WHOSE NAME AND APPEARANCE I HAD TAKEN--
18

"I WAS INDEED--A BLACK PANTHER!
"MUSCLES TRAINED, REFLEXES HONED TO A FINE POINT BY YEARS OF ATHLETICS-- ALL INTERACTED WITH THE MYSTERY-SHROUDED PANTHER HERB--
"--TO MAKE ME UNSTOPPABLE-- UNCONQUERABLE!
"BUT, WHEN THE LAST AIM AGENT HAD FALLEN--I REALIZED HOW FUTILE MY NEWFOUND STRENGTH, HOW USELESS MY CATLIKE PROWESS--WHERE IT COUNTED MOST--
B'TUMBA!
DO NOT-- MOURN FOR ME-- T'CHALLA--
I WAS A GREEDY FOOL-- GOT WHAT I DESERVED--
MY FATHER--INNOCENT IN ALL THIS--NEVER WANTED ANYTHING BUT GOOD FOR YOU--
I WON'T, B'TUMBA--I SWEAR IT!
DON'T TELL HIM-- I WEAKENED-- BETRAYED HIM-- PLEASE-- PLEASE--
ANY MAN CAN MAKE--A MISTAKE. I--
B'TUMBA--!?
"YES--ANY MAN CAN MAKE A MISTAKE. BUT, AS TEARS WELLED UP IN GLAZED EYES, I KNEW THAT I HAD MADE MORE THAN ONE, THAT DAY--
"--AND THAT LONG DAYS, ANGUISHED NIGHTS WOULD PASS BEFORE I COULD FORGIVE MYSELF--
"--AS I HAD ALREADY FORGIVEN HIM."
19

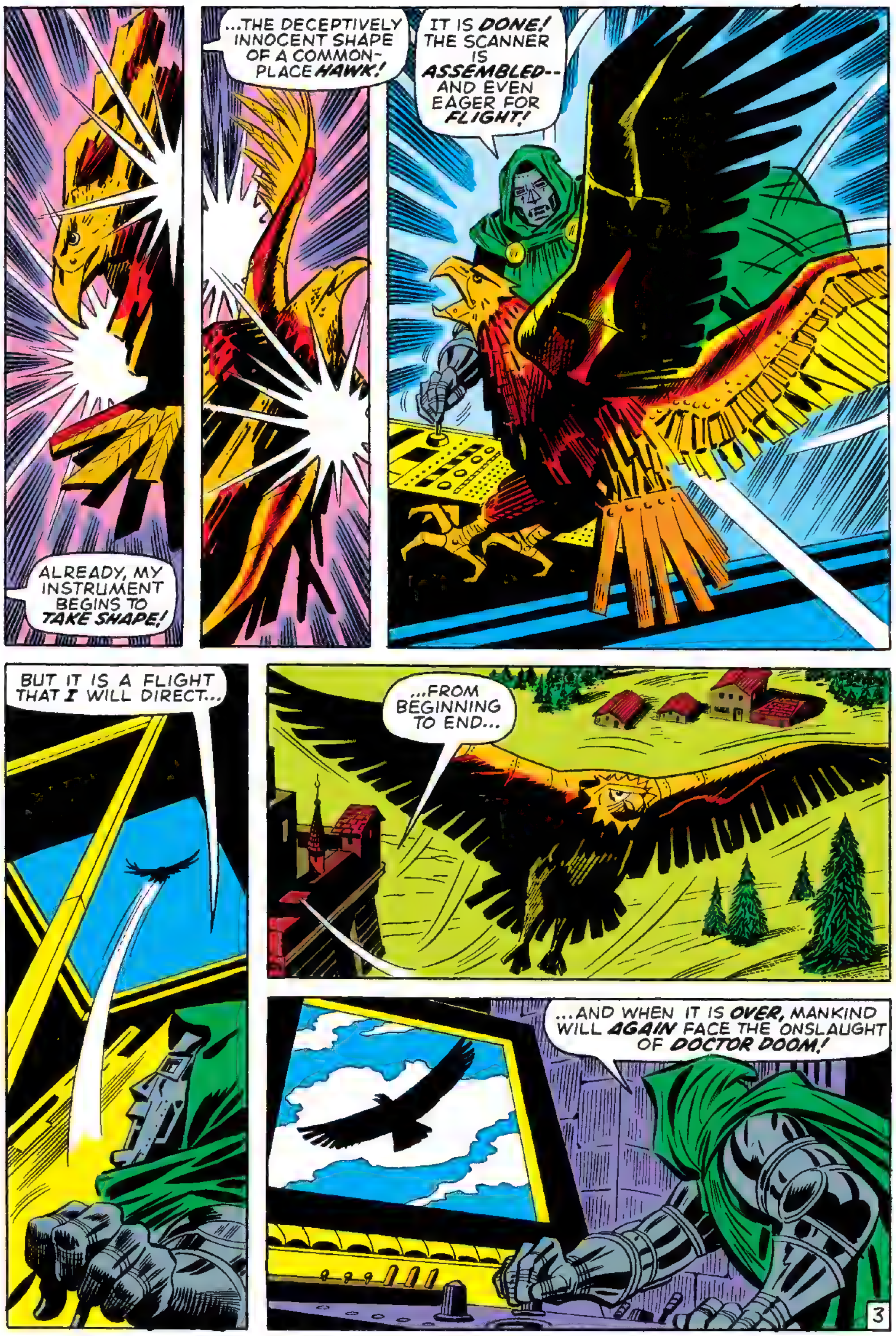

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT, MY FRIENDS--AN ORIGIN OF SORTS--
--BUT ONE I CAN SCARCELY POINT TO WITH PRINCELY PRIDE--
ONE WHICH RETURNS TO HAUNT ME ANEW-- ON CERTAIN NIGHTS WHEN THE SILENCE GROWS DEAFENINGLY LOUD.
NOTHIN' BUT SAD SONGS FOR US SUPER-HEROES, IS THERE?
I LOST A BROTHER ON ONE CAPER-- PIETRO AND WANDA WERE MUTANTS AND OUTCASTS--
THE METAL OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS FORGED UPON THE ANVIL OF SORROW, AVENGER.
THUS HATH IT EVER BEEN--THUS SHALL IT EVER BE.
BUT, WHAT OF THY HIDDEN TRIBE, T'CHALLA
IT HAS BEEN GUIDED IN MY LONG ABSENCE BY THE WISE HAND OF N'BAZA--
--HIM WHOM I WRONGED-- AND WHOSE SON I WAS TOO BLIND TO HELP-- UNTIL TOO LATE.
BUT TONIGHT, I RECEIVED A MESSAGE THAT OLD N'BAZA HAS--DIED!
AND SO, I MUST SOON DECIDE WHETHER TO DON ONCE MORE THE MANTLE OF KING-SHIP--OR RENOUNCE IT FOREVER.
NOW--IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I MUST BE ALONE-- TO THINK--
THERE GOES ONE GREAT GUY--BUT WE ALL KNOW THE CHOICE HE'S GOTTA MAKE.
LIKE I SAID BEFORE-- THIS AVENGIN' SHTICK GETS IN YOUR BLOOD.
ONCE AN AVENGER--ALWAYS AN AVENGER!
YOU'LL SEE.
AH, GOLIATH--CLINT BARTON--IF ONLY THE TORMENTED T'CHALLA POSSESSED YOUR EASY ASSURANCE OF THINGS--
--IF ONLY HE KNEW WHETHER HIS DESTINY LAY IN THE DUAL ROLE OF GHETTO TEACHER AND CRIME-BATTLING PANTHER--
--OR AS THE ONLY SON, AND TRUE HEIR, OF THE GREATEST CHIEFTAIN OF ALL.
HOW SIMPLE THEN TO ACT--- BUT NOW SO HARD--
--SO VERY, VERY HARD--!



ASTONISHING TALES
15¢
6
JUNE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ASTONISHING TALES
FEATURING
KA-ZAR
AND
DR. DOOM
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
BEWARE THE MAN-GOD THAT MEN CALL DAMON!
PLUS:
THE TYRANT OF LATVERIA INVADES THE AFRICAN STRONGHOLD OF
T'CHALLA!
TWIN TRIUMPHS FROM THE HOUSE OF IDEAS!

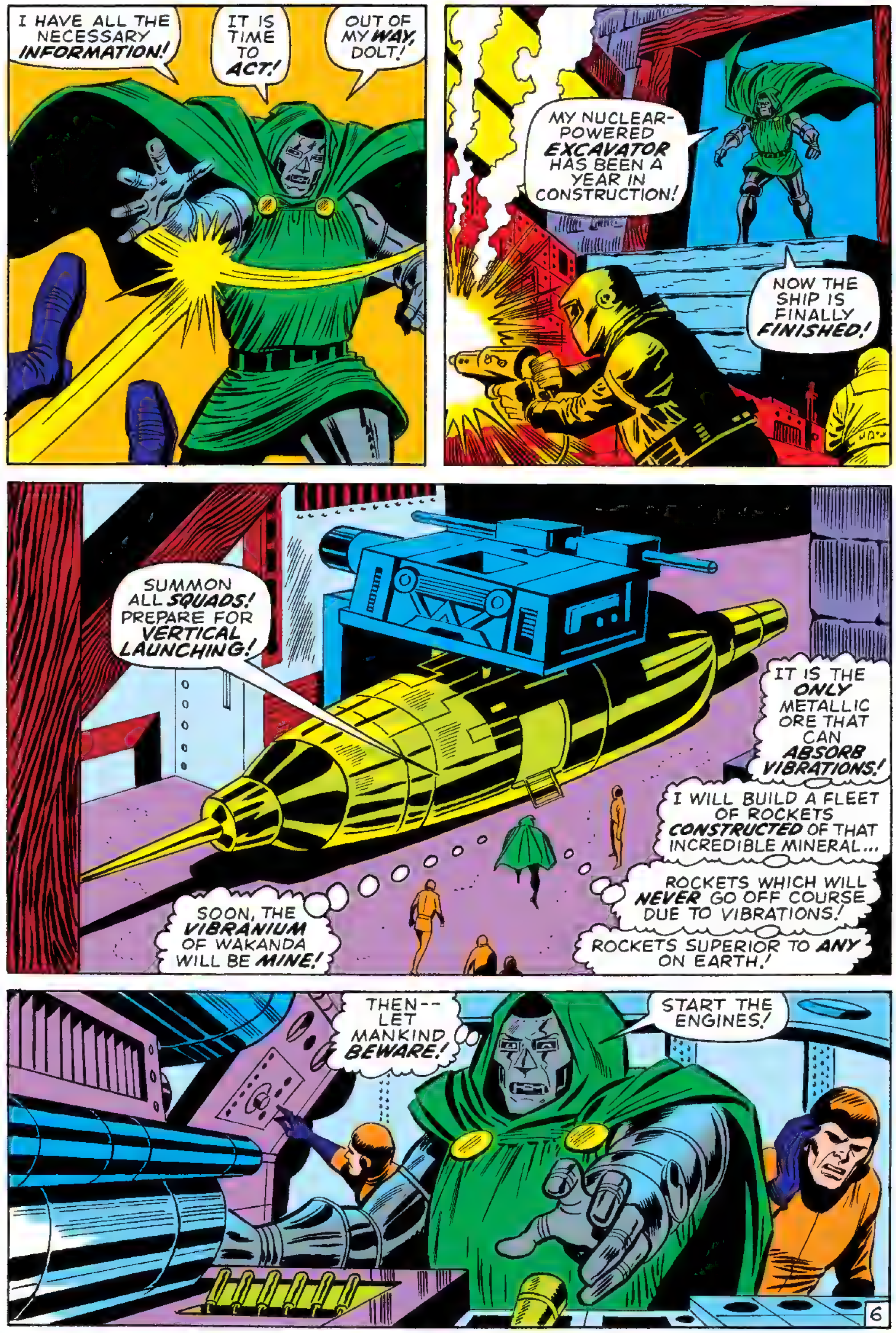
DOCTOR DOOM, MASTER OF MENACE!
THE TENTACLES OF THE TYRANT!
WELCOME TO AN INTERROGATION SESSION, LATVERIAN STYLE!
AGAIN! INCREASE THE CHARGE!
AIIEEE! NO--NO MORE! I WILL GIVE YOU THE INFORMATION! STOP! STOP!!
HAH! NOTHING LOOSENS A STUBBORN TONGUE AS SWIFTLY AS THE DOOMRACK!
STAN LEE EDITOR • LARRY LIEBER WRITER • GEORGE TUSKA ARTIST
MIKE ESPOSITO INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER

THE MINERAL YOU SEEK--VIBRANIUM--IT IS FOUND IN ONLY ONE PART OF AFRICA--IN THE KINGDOM OF WAKANDA!
WAKANDA! SO! RELEASE THE PRISONER!
RELEASE? BUT, MASTER, NOW THAT WE'VE NO FURTHER NEED OF OUR CAPTIVE--WHY NOT DESTROY HIM?
IT WILL BE AMUSING--
SILENCE! YOU WITLESS FOOL! DO YOU THINK ME A SAVAGE?
RELEASE THE PRISONER AT ONCE--OR YOU WILL TAKE HIS PLACE!
LITTLE IS KNOWN OF WAKANDA!
I MUST INVESTIGATE FURTHER!
THEN WILL I STRIKE!
MOMENTS LATER, STEEL-SHOD FINGERS ZAP OPEN A SECRET PANEL!
WITHIN THIS HIDDEN CHAMBER, I HAVE BUILT THE ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS OF A SCANNING DEVICE!
NOW IT IS TIME TO BRING THOSE SECTIONS TOGETHER--TO ASSEMBLE THEM!
2


ALREADY, MY INSTRUMENT BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE!
...THE DECEPTIVELY INNOCENT SHAPE OF A COMMON-PLACE HAWK!
IT IS DONE! THE SCANNER IS ASSEMBLED-- AND EVEN EAGER FOR FLIGHT!
BUT IT IS A FLIGHT THAT I WILL DIRECT...
...FROM BEGINNING TO END...
...AND WHEN IT IS OVER, MANKIND WILL AGAIN FACE THE ONSLAUGHT OF DOCTOR DOOM!
3

BUT WAIT-- I SEE A POACHER LURKING IN THE ROYAL WOODS!
HE HAS SPIED THE SCANNER!
THAT HAWK OVERHEAD WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT TROPHY STUFFED AND MOUNTED!
HAWKS ARE A VANISHING SPECIES!
IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO SLAY THEM!
BUT I'M NO LILY-LIVERED CONSERVATION-IST!
TO ME ALL LIVING THINGS ARE FAIR GAME!
BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE POACHER, HE IS NOT ALONE IN THAT RUTHLESS SENTIMENT!
WHEN THE LORD OF LATVERIA BUILDS SOME-THING...
HE DOES NOT LEAVE IT UNPROTECTED!
ZISTT!
THUS DO I DISPOSE OF THOSE WHO WOULD THWART MY PLAN!
NOW I MUST DIRECT MY SCANNER SOUTH, TOWARD THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA--AND THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS!
4

THREE HOURS LATER...
MY SCANNER HAS REACHED WAKANDA!
EVEN NOW, ITS ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS ARE DETECTING THE DEPOSITS OF VIBRANIUM LOCATED IN THAT SMALL KINGDOM!
AND NOW THAT I HAVE PINPOINTED AND RECORDED THE VIBRANIUM'S PRECISE LOCATION...
I HAVE NO FURTHER NEED OF MY WINGED INFORMER!
AND WHAT DOOM DOES NOT NEED, HE DESTROYS!
BTAM!
5


I HAVE ALL THE NECESSARY INFORMATION!
IT IS TIME TO ACT!
OUT OF MY WAY, DOLT!
MY NUCLEAR-POWERED EXCAVATOR HAS BEEN A YEAR IN CONSTRUCTION!
NOW THE SHIP IS FINALLY FINISHED!
SUMMON ALL SQUADS! PREPARE FOR VERTICAL LAUNCHING!
SOON, THE VIBRANIUM OF WAKANDA WILL BE MINE!
IT IS THE ONLY METALLIC ORE THAT CAN ABSORB VIBRATIONS!
I WILL BUILD A FLEET OF ROCKETS CONSTRUCTED OF THAT INCREDIBLE MINERAL...
ROCKETS WHICH WILL NEVER GO OFF COURSE DUE TO VIBRATIONS!
ROCKETS SUPERIOR TO ANY ON EARTH!
THEN--LET MANKIND BEWARE!
START THE ENGINES!
6

BEEROWER
THEY COME FROM THE CASTLE!
THAT NOISE! THOSE TREMORS!
FLEE! FLEE!
ZZWEEE!
BUT FLIGHT IS UNNECESSARY... FOR, AS THE EXCAVATOR BURROWS DOWNWARD, IT REFILLS THE HOLE IN ITS WAKE, LEAVING OUR SURFACE UNCHANGED AND SAFE!
WE HAVE REACHED MAXIMUM DEPTH!
LEVEL OFF AND PROCEDE SOUTH!
EUROPE
AFRICA
WE'RE UNDER THE MEDITERRANEAN!
IN ANOTHER HOUR WE SHALL BE IN AFRICA!
GROWRR
ON AND ON, THRU THE ROCK AND MINERAL BOWELS OF THE EARTH, BURROWS THE INCREDIBLE SHIP--
UNTIL, AT LAST...
WE HAVE ARRIVED! WE ARE DIRECTLY BENEATH WAKANDA!

AND, WHILE THE INVADERS PREPARE THEIR ASCENT, THE UNSUSPECTING WAKANDAS GO ABOUT THEIR PEACEFUL ACTIVITIES...
UNTIL...
RUMMMBLE
THE EARTH IS SHAKING! THE GROUND IS SPLITTING APART!
FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE!
AIIEEEE!
8

BUT NOT ALL THE WAKANDAS FLEE IN PANIC!
I MUST REACH THE TRANSMITTER! I MUST!
I MADE IT! NOW TO SUMMON THE ONLY MAN WHO CAN SAVE US! HE, WHO WAS OUR LEADER! T'CHALLA, THE BLACK PANTHER!
MOMENTS LATER, IN THE FIFTH-AVENUE MANSION OF THE WORLD-FAMED AVENGERS...
THE AFRICAN BROTHERS ARE IN DANGER!
*SEE CURRENT ISSUE OF AVENGERS FOR EXPLANATION. --STAN.
I HAD PLANNED TO DEPART FOR MY HOMELAND TOMORROW-- TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF N'BAZA!*
BUT NOW--THERE IS NO MOMENT TO WASTE!
THE PANTHER MUST STALK AGAIN--NOW!
MINUTES LATER, THE BLACK WARRIOR BLASTS OFF FROM WHAT WE CALL CIVILIZATION...
AND ROCKETS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC TO THE WILD AND PRIMITIVE LAND OF HIS BIRTH!
STRANGE...THE GOLDEN VOLCANO HAS BEEN DORMANT FOR AGES!
NOW, SUDDENLY, IT ERUPTS! WHY?
BUT T'CHALLA'S QUESTION IS SOON DROWNED OUT BY THE CRIES OF HIS PEOPLE--
THE ERUPTION IS THE WRATH OF THE GODS!
SILENCE!
WE ARE DOOMED! ALL OF US!
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT CAUSED THE CATACLYSM! BUT I WILL FIND OUT-- AND STOP IT!
ON THIS YOU HAVE THE WORD OF T'CHALLA!

THE ANSWER--WHATEVER IT MAY BE--MUST LIE WITHIN THE VOLCANO ITSELF!
BUT NO MAN COULD SURVIVE THE DEADLY DESCENT INTO THAT LIVING CAULDRON OF MOLTEN LAVA!
...NO MAN, THAT IS, EXCEPT ONE WHO POSSESSES ALL THE SPEED AND AGILITY OF A JUNGLE CAT!
MEANWHILE, IN THE SUBTERRANEAN DEPTHS BELOW...
THE SHIP'S NEUTRON REGULATOR HAS MALFUNCTIONED!
I MUST FIND A SECLUDED SPOT TO REPAIR ITS INTRICATE MECHANISM!
A PLACE WHERE I CAN CONCENTRATE WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF FOOLS!
BUT, AS DOCTOR DOOM LAYS ASIDE HIS WEAPON TO REPAIR THE REGULATOR...
10
A BLACK-GLOVED HAND REACHES STEALTHILY FROM THE SHADOWS...
...AND TRAINS THE WEAPON ON THE ARMOR-COVERED INVADER BEFORE HIM!
THIS IS THE FINISH, DOOM-- YOUR FINISH!!
NEXT: BATTLE!

ASTONISHING TALES
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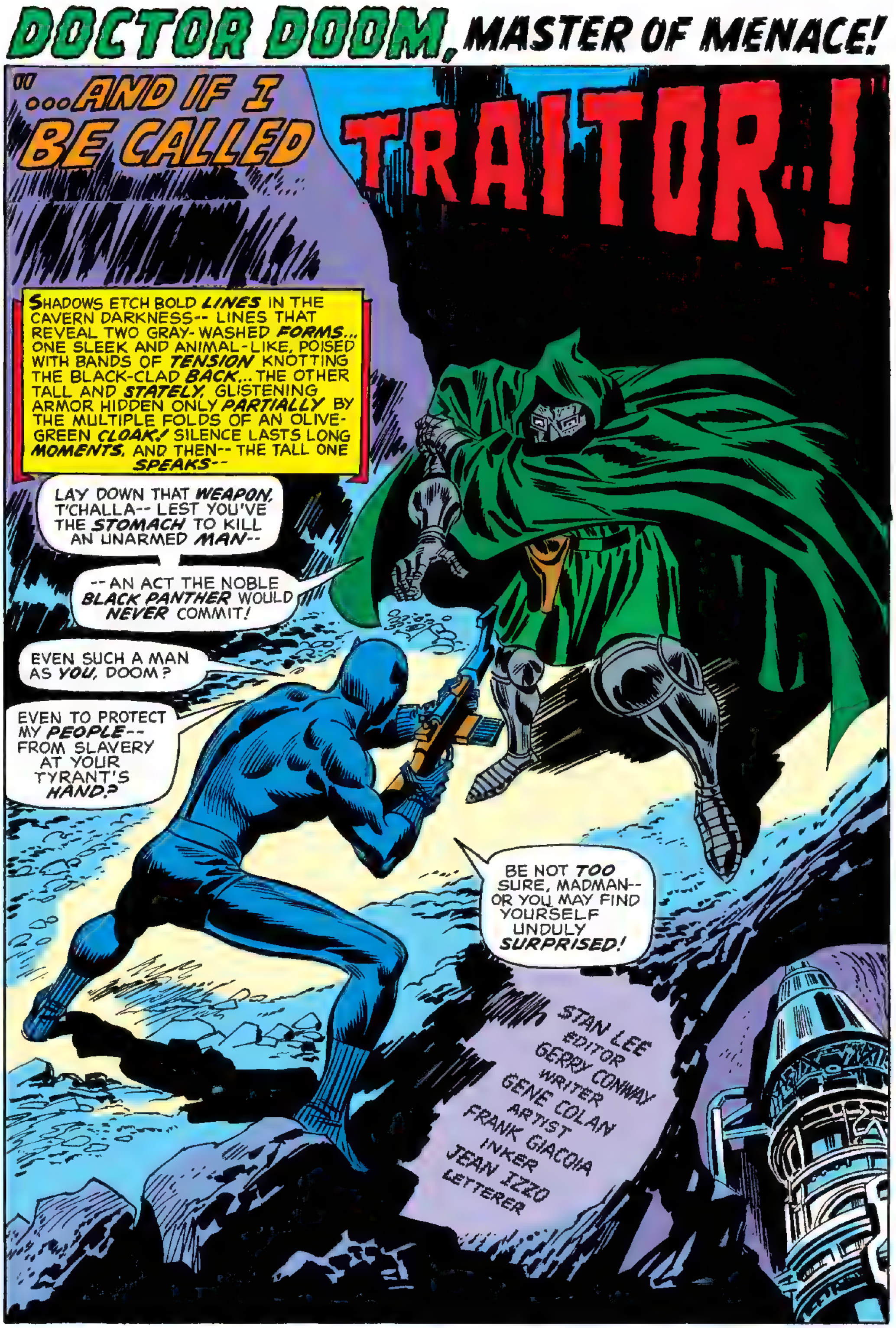
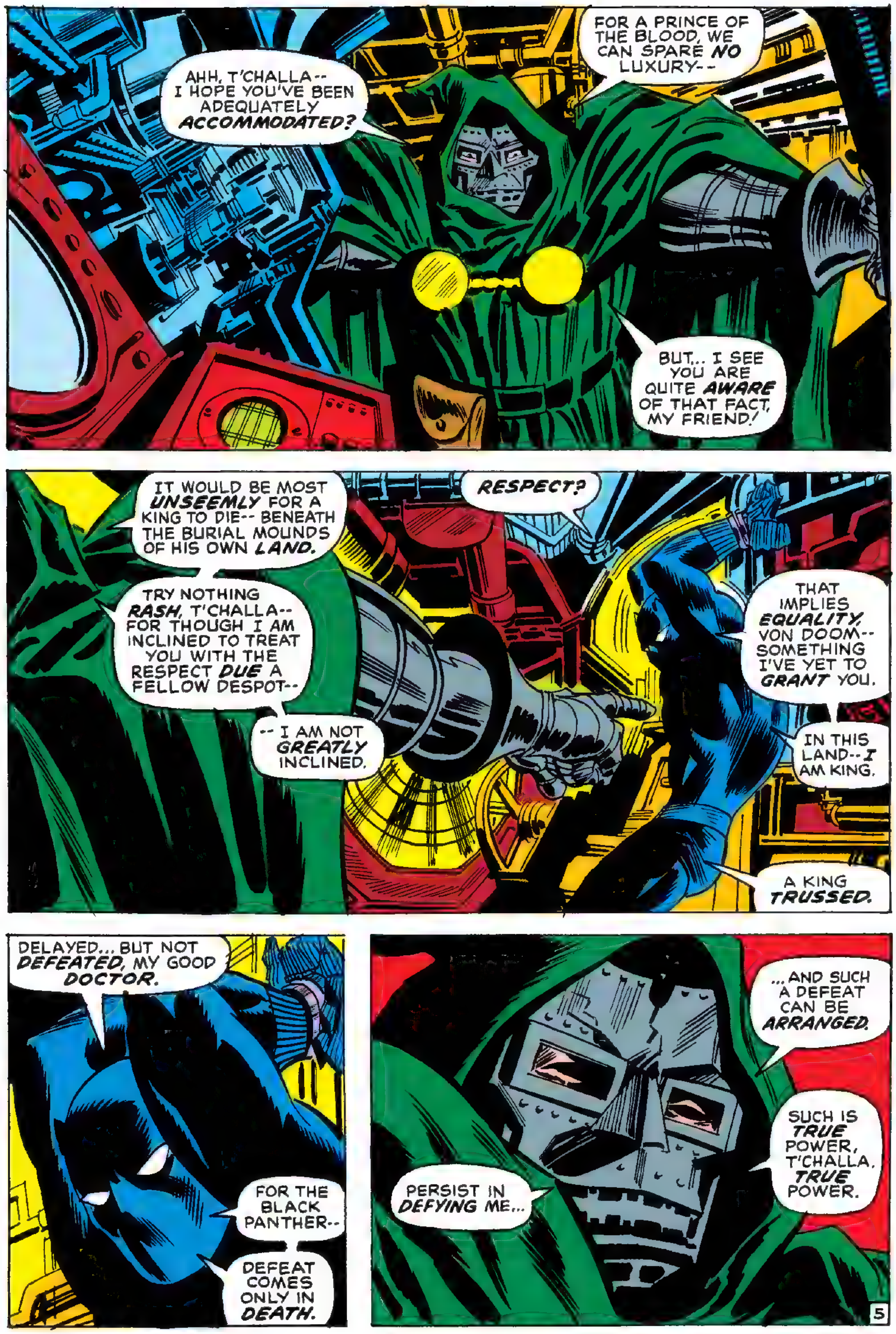
ASTONISHING TALES
FEATURING
KA-ZAR
AND
DR. DOOM
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
STRIKE, ZABU! A GOD MUST DIE--
--THAT THE SAVAGE LAND MAY LIVE!!
DOUBLE DYNAMITE FROM MAGNIFICENT MARVEL!
...AND ONE IS TRAITOR!
CO-STARRING: THE MAN CALLED T'CHALLA!


DOCTOR DOOM, MASTER OF MENACE!
"...AND IF I BE CALLED TRAITOR--!"
SHADOWS ETCH BOLD LINES IN THE CAVERN DARKNESS-- LINES THAT REVEAL TWO GRAY-WASHED FORMS... ONE SLEEK AND ANIMAL-LIKE, POISED WITH BANDS OF TENSION KNOTTING THE BLACK-CLAD BACK... THE OTHER TALL AND STATELY, GLISTENING ARMOR HIDDEN ONLY PARTIALLY BY THE MULTIPLE FOLDS OF AN OLIVE-GREEN CLOAK! SILENCE LASTS LONG MOMENTS, AND THEN-- THE TALL ONE SPEAKS--
LAY DOWN THAT WEAPON, T'CHALLA-- LEST YOU'VE THE STOMACH TO KILL AN UNARMED MAN--
--AN ACT THE NOBLE BLACK PANTHER WOULD NEVER COMMIT!
EVEN SUCH A MAN AS YOU, DOOM?
EVEN TO PROTECT MY PEOPLE-- FROM SLAVERY AT YOUR TYRANT'S HAND?
BE NOT TOO SURE, MADMAN-- OR YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF UNDULY SURPRISED!
STAN LEE EDITOR
GERRY CONWAY WRITER
GENE COLAN ARTIST
FRANK GIACOIA INKER
JEAN IZZO LETTERER

I KNOW YOUR KIND, T'CHALLA--
HONOR-- EVEN BEFORE EXPEDIENCE!
PUT THAT WEAPON DOWN, T'CHALLA-- NOW!
OR-- AREN'T YOU MAN ENOUGH TO BATTLE--ON EQUAL TERMS?
AGAINST THE LIKES OF YOU, VICTOR VON DOOM--
--I NEED NO WEAPONS BUT MY OWN HANDS!
COME, DOOM-- I CALL YOUR BLUFF!
AND FOR IT-- YOU PROVE YOURSELF A BLIND FOOL.
WOULD YOU THINK I'D FORFEIT MY CHANCE TO GAIN THE VIBRANIUM SECRETED IN THIS MOUNTAIN'S STONES--
-- JUST TO WAR WITH YOU?
DOOM SOILS NOT HIS HANDS WITH FOUL COMBAT, PANTHER--
LEAST OF ALL... WITH ONE SO POWERLESS.
ENERGY SEEMS TO LEAP FROM THE FINGERS OF THE MAN CALLED DOCTOR DOOM-- ENERGY THAT DANCES AND BATHES THE OFF-GUARD PANTHER...
...BATHES HIM... AND BRINGS HIM DOWN!
REMOVE HIM-- AND SEE THAT NONE DISTURB ME.
CONSIDER YOURSELF FORTUNATE, T'CHALLA--
--THAT I'VE NO MORE TIME TO SPEND-- CONVERSING.
HOW GOES THE DRILLING, RAMON?
WE'VE STRUCK THE CORE, HERR DOCTOR.
BUT AN HOUR LEFT... NO MORE.
EXCELLENT. EXCELLENT!
CONTINUE AS PLANNED.
2

BY DAY'S END, I'LL HAVE THE VIBRANIUM I NEED TO BUILD MY MOST PERFECT WEAPONS--
AND T'CHALLA-- WITH HIS PEOPLE-- SHALL BE MY MOST OBEDIENT VASSAL.
OR-- WILL HE? THERE SEEMS A STREAK OF HONOR IN THE PRINCE OF THE WAKANDAS--
--A STREAK I EARLIER SOUGHT TO MOCK. AND YET, I SEE THERE WAS TRUTH IN WHAT I SAID...
...FOR THE PANTHER IS A BRAVE MAN-- AND A PROUD ONE. ODD HOW EVEN THE MOST IGNORANT OF SAVAGES CAN THINK OF PRIDE...
IN HIS WAY, T'CHALLA IS AS MUCH A SOVEREIGN AS I-- THOUGH HIS KINGDOM IS A POOR ONE-- HIS PEOPLE BUT VICIOUS PRIMITIVES--
THERE IS STILL A TOUCH OF NOBILITY THERE...
A TOUCH-- OF THE KING.
YET-- WHO CAN COMPARE WITH DOOM-- LAST OF THE TRUE MONARCHS?
WHOSE POWER MATCHES MINE-- WHOSE KINGDOM AS SUBSERVIENT?
NONE HAS THE STRENGTH-- OR THE GLORY-- OF VICTOR VON DOOM!
AND SO IT SHOULD BE-- FOR MINE IS THE DESTINY TO RULE...
TO RULE-- AND CONQUER--
TO STRUGGLE-- TILL THE VERY WORLD IS MINE!
3

AND SO MUST I HURRY..!
T'CHALLA INTERRUPTED ME WHILE I WAS REPAIRING THE DELICATE REGULATOR DEVICE--
NOW I SHALL COMPLETE THE REPAIR WITH CAREFUL HASTE.
EH?
HERR DOCTOR!
HERR DOCTOR DOOM!
WHAT IS IT, BLITHERING ONES?
THE PILE, HERR DOCTOR-- THE VIBRANIUM IS REVEALED.
AND MASTER-- SOMETHING IS WRONG!
TOUCH NOTHING. I'LL BE THERE-- IN A MOMENT.
DOOM IS MAD-- CAN YOU NOT SEE IT IN HIS EYES?
SILENCE, CARL-- LEST HE HEAR YOU-- AND SPEED THE DEATH YOU SO DESPERATELY FEAR.
HE'LL CAUSE ALL OUR DEATHS! THE MAN-- IS INSANE!
THE MASTER MAY BE MAD-- BUT HE'S NOT DEAF.
LOOK-- SEE THE WAY HE WATCHES US? ONE WOULD THINK HE COULD SEE OUR VERY LIPS MOVE!
AND WELL HE MIGHT!
QUIET-- LEST WE SHOW OURSELVES TOTAL IDIOTS!
WITH A HISS OF HYDRAULIC MACHINERY, THE GREAT EXCAVATOR SLIDES EASILY OPEN, AND THE MAN NAMED DOOM BENDS FORWARD TO EXAMINE THE THUS-REVEALED INTERIOR...
TWO HUNDRED FEET FROM THE CENTRAL LODE-- AND THE DRIVE MECHANISM GAVE OUT.
TO WHAT SHOULD WE ATTRIBUTE IT, MASTER?
TO YOUR OWN BUMBLING STUPIDITY!
I SHALL DO IT, INCOMPETENT-- AND SO SHALL IT BE DONE RIGHT.
THE COIL IS OVERHEATED-- IT NEEDS TO BE REPLACED.
4

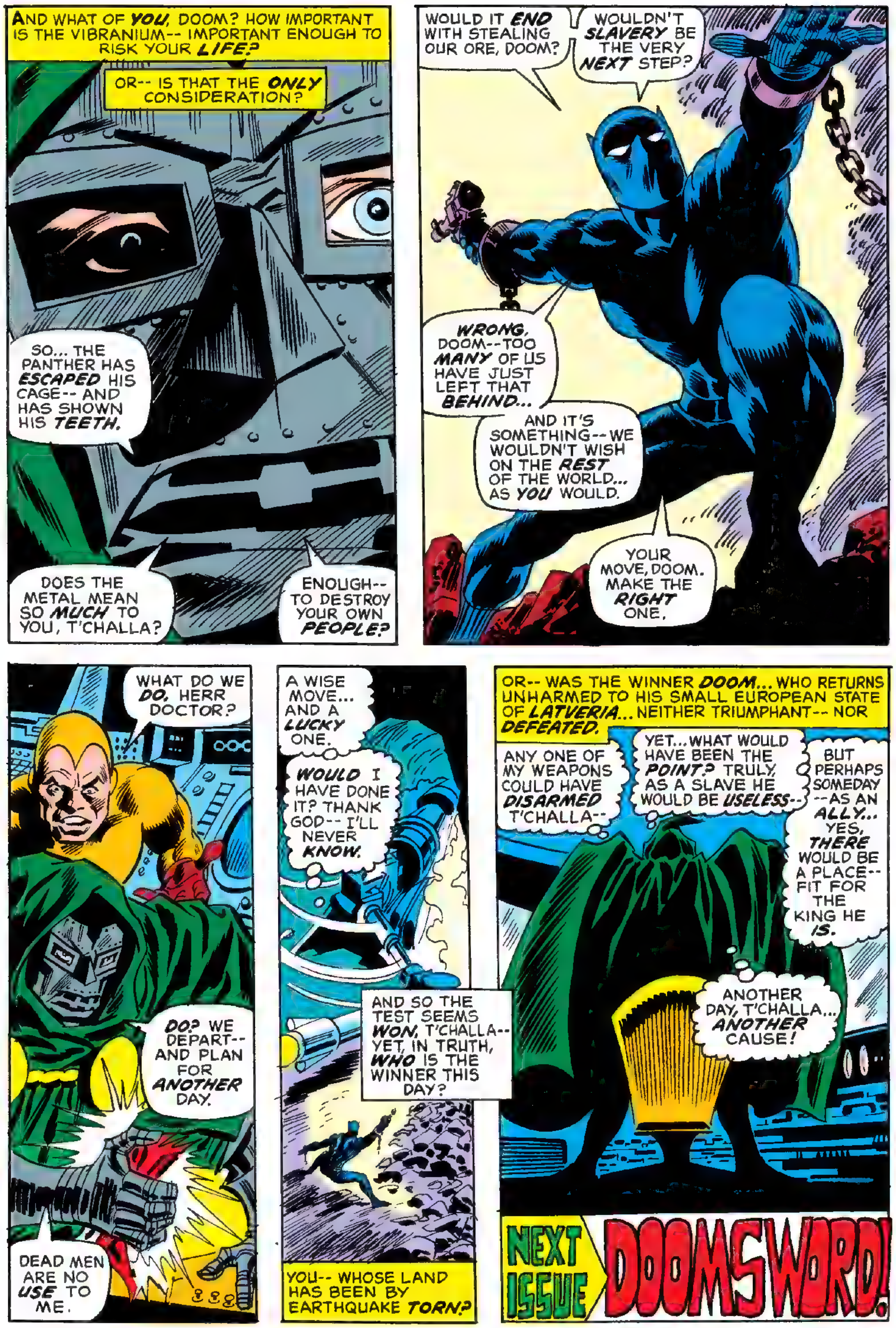

AHH, T'CHALLA-- I HOPE YOU'VE BEEN ADEQUATELY ACCOMMODATED?
FOR A PRINCE OF THE BLOOD, WE CAN SPARE NO LUXURY--
BUT... I SEE YOU ARE QUITE AWARE OF THAT FACT, MY FRIEND!
IT WOULD BE MOST UNSEEMLY FOR A KING TO DIE-- BENEATH THE BURIAL MOUNDS OF HIS OWN LAND.
RESPECT?
TRY NOTHING RASH, T'CHALLA-- FOR THOUGH I AM INCLINED TO TREAT YOU WITH THE RESPECT DUE A FELLOW DESPOT--
-- I AM NOT GREATLY INCLINED.
THAT IMPLIES EQUALITY, VON DOOM-- SOMETHING I'VE YET TO GRANT YOU.
IN THIS LAND-- I AM KING.
A KING TRUSSED.
DELAYED... BUT NOT DEFEATED, MY GOOD DOCTOR.
FOR THE BLACK PANTHER--
DEFEAT COMES ONLY IN DEATH.
PERSIST IN DEFYING ME...
...AND SUCH A DEFEAT CAN BE ARRANGED.
SUCH IS TRUE POWER, T'CHALLA. TRUE POWER.
5

POWER IS...THE PEOPLE'S, DOOM.
SOMETHING A TYRANT NEVER UNDERSTANDS.
THEIRS ONLY IF YOU LET THEM HAVE IT, T'CHALLA.
SUCH A LARGE "IF."
AND SO HE LEAVES, CLOAK SWIRLING, A DARK OLIVE SHADOW PASSING INTO DARKNESS...
DOOM'S EITHER A GENIUS-- OR A FOOL.
HE MUST KNOW HOW UNSTABLE VIBRANIUM IS--
BUT THE SLIGHTEST SHOCK-- AND THE ENTIRE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE DISSOLVES VIOLENTLY!
WHICH MEANS... I HAVE THE KEY TO HALT DOOM'S JUGGERNAUT PLANS--
--IF I CAN JUST GET FREE.
"SUCH A LARGE 'IF.'" T'CHALLA...!
BALANCING ON STRAINING TIPTOES--
--T'CHALLA STRETCHES, INCHING HIS SHACKLED WRISTS UP THE BAR HE'S CHAINED TO...
AND WHEN PROPERLY BRACED--
--HE MOVES!
SOME SORT OF T-CONNECTION... WEAKEST SPOT ON THE ENTIRE PIPE.
WITH THE PROPER LEVERAGE-- FROM AGAINST THE BULKHEAD--
MAYBE-- I CAN--
--SNAP IT!
6

DONE!
NOW, DOCTOR VICTOR VON DOOM-- NOW WE'LL SEE ABOUT POWER...
AND ABOUT A LITTLE THING-- CALLED HONOR!
WHAT HONOR IN DISASTER, T'CHALLA? EXPLAIN THE JOY OF HOUSE AND LIFE CRUMBLING-- THAT THE WEALTH OF ONE MAN MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED TO THE STOCKPILE OF ANOTHER...
FOR, UNKNOWN TO DOOM OR THE WAKANDAS' PRINCE, THE EARTH-CHEWING FORCE OF THE FORWARD-MOVING EXCAVATOR IS CAUSING BRUTAL TURMOIL ON THE SURFACE--
AND THE VERY QUESTION OF TYRANNY SEEMS MOST-- ACADEMIC.
C'CHINA-- THE ROCKS!
BEWARE, MY WIFE-- BEWARE!
D'KAR-- STAY BACK!
MOTHER-- EVERYTHING MOVES--!
SEEK SAFETY FOR MYSELF-- WHILE CHILD AND WIFE ARE THREATENED?
NEVER!
WE ARE DOOMED!
THE EARTH JUMPS AND DANCES AT OUR FEET!
WHY? WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?
THERE'S NO ANSWER TO THE FEAR-TORN CRY OF THE VILLAGE WOMAN-- AS THERE'S NO ANSWER IN THE CENTRAL CITY TO THE NORTH...
THOM... WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
FOR, THERE-- HAVOC RUNS INSANELY THROUGH THE CROWDED STREETS!
THE BUILDINGS-- JIGGLING AND SWAYING--
COME ON, MAN-- MOVE IT!
I MIGHT FIND THAT A BIT DIFFICULT, BROTHER--
--ON ACCOUNT OF THIS BROKEN LEG!
AND SO IT GOES... EVERYWHERE, FATE JUMBLES CHAOS AND MADNESS-- AND WHAT OF THE CAUSE--?
7

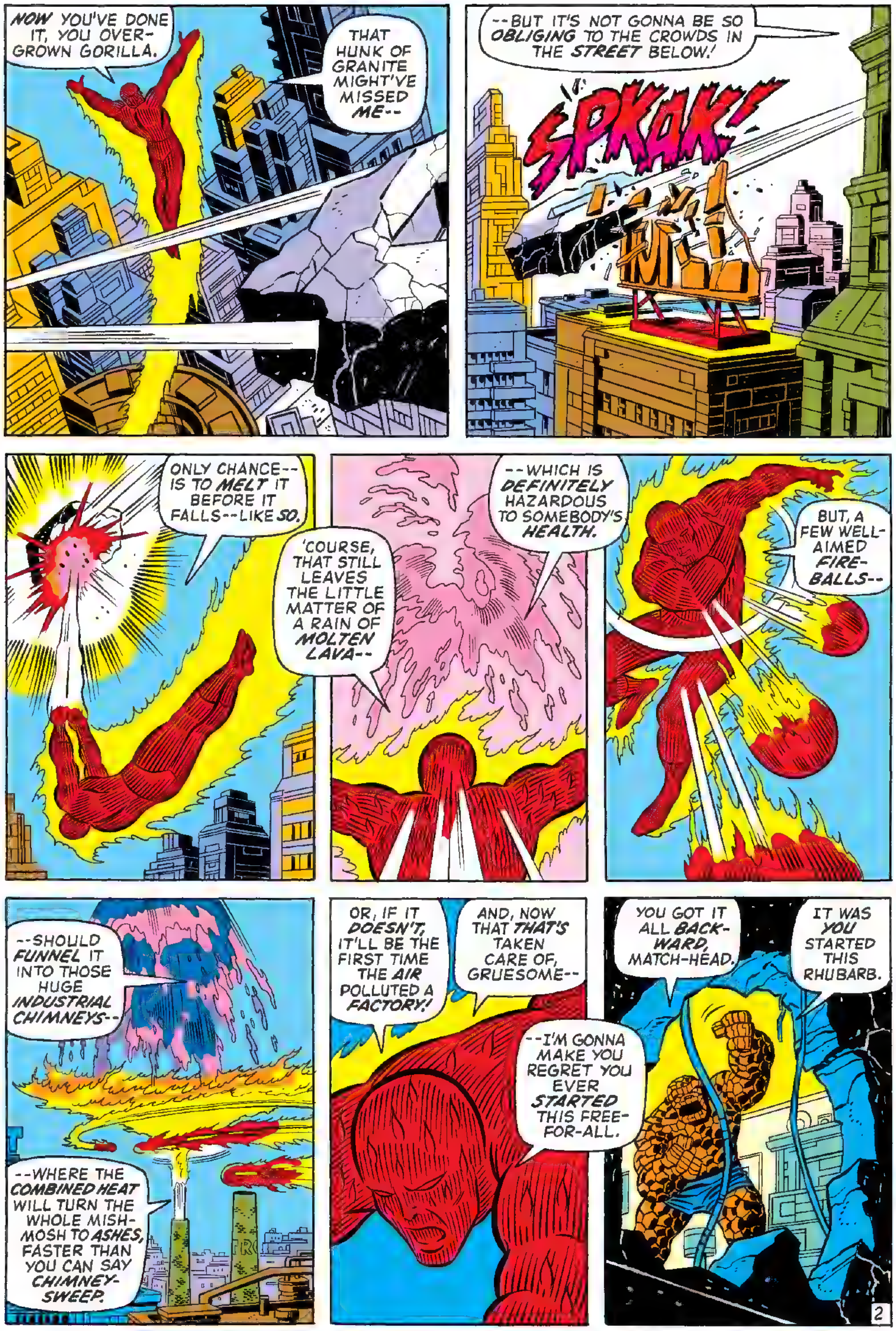
TAKE THE CORE OF A MOLTEN SUN, PACK IT BETWEEN THE FINGERS OF A GARGANTUAN FIST, AND THEN SHOVE THAT FIST THROUGH SAND AND ROCK, THROUGH EARTH AND STONE-- DOWN INTO THE VERY HEART OF A WORLD--
DO THAT-- AND YOU MAY IMAGINE ONE THOUSANDTH OF THE POWER WHICH DOOM'S EXCAVATOR CONSUMES-- AS IT BORES THROUGH THE VEINS AND MUSCLE OF A PLANET'S SKIN...
DOWN-- DOWN TO THE VIBRANT SOUL OF THAT EARTH...!
TO-- VIBRANIUM!
DEEPER, YOU BUMBLING INCOMPETENTS.
THE VIBRANIUM IS ONLY PARTIALLY EXPOSED!
WE MUST REGAIN THE TIME LOST BY THOSE MORONIC REPAIRS.
THEN LET IT BE!
DON'T YOU FEEL IT-- THE ENTIRE SHIP IS VIBRATING-- SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY!
STOP IT! STOP!
DARE YOU APPROACH ME-- AND SPEAK WITHOUT LEAVE?
FOR SUCH TRANSGRESSIONS ALONE WOULD YOU BE PUNISHED!
CCCHOOOM!
--WITHOUT THE ADDED CRIME OF COWARDICE.
DOOM TOLERATES NO WEAKNESS.
ALL WHO SURROUND ME MUST BE STRONG-- AS I AM STRONG.
IT IS A LESSON YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED, RAMON-- FOR NOW, IT'S MUCH TOO LATE...
CHUNK!
CHUNK
STUNNER BLASTS! DOOM-- SHOOTING HIS OWN MEN?
THAT CLINCHES IT! I'LL HAVE TO BE AS RUTHLESS AS HE IS.
8

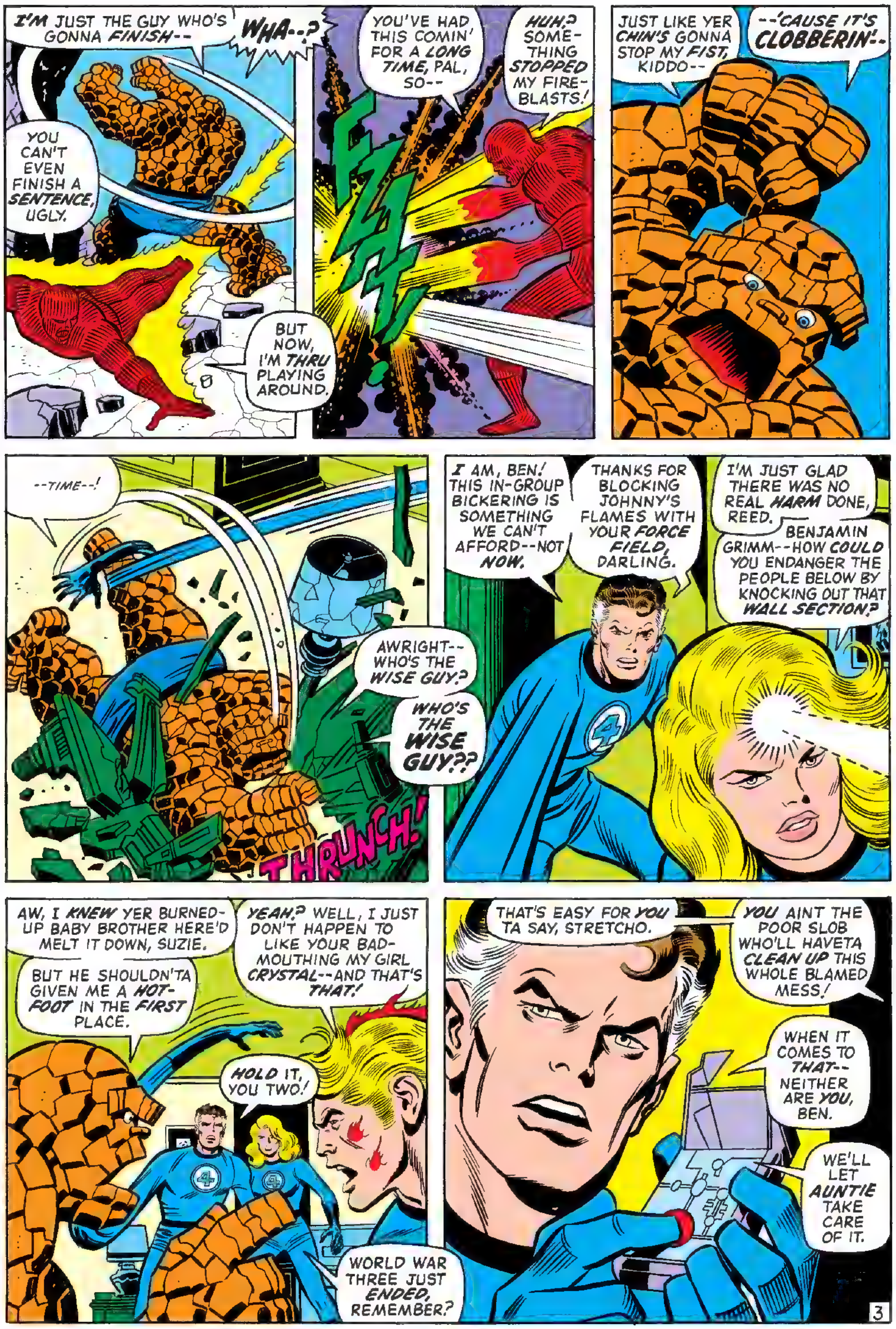
NOW, T'CHALLA-- HOW FAR WILL YOU CARRY THAT LITTLE DECISION?
GENTLY, MY FRIEND-- TURN MOST GENTLY.
YOUR BACK IS A MOST FINE TARGET.
WHEN I LEFT NEW YORK-- IT WAS TO REGAIN MY PEOPLE--
PERHAPS EVEN-- TO GIVE UP THE BATTLING-- THE ENDLESS FIGHTS--
THE CHAIN--!
KLANG!
YET-- THERE SEEMS NO END-- NO REST FOR THESE WAR-WEARY LIMBS.
KING THOUGH I AM-- WARRIOR I REMAIN!
FALL QUIETLY, MY FRIEND--
YOUR MASTER MUST NOT BE WARNED OF MY FREEDOM--
NO... FOR DOOM, IT MUST BE-- A FABULOUS SURPRISE.
HE SPOKE OF HONOR... LET IT BE A TEST, THEN--
WHO SHALL DIE-- FOR THE GREATER GLORY... THE GREATER HONOR?
SO SHALL THE TRUE ROYALTY BE JUDGED!
NOW, T'CHALLA, THE TEST-- PERHAPS OF THIS MAN NAMED DOOM-- PERHAPS OF YOURSELF.
HOW FAR WILL YOUR HONOR TAKE YOU, PANTHER? AT WHAT POINT DOES YOUR PRIDE-- DRAW THE PROVERBIAL LINE?
IS DEATH THE BORDER? OR IS IT SOMETHING FAR MORE POTENT--?
NO FURTHER, DOOM!
ONE BOLT-- ONE STUN-BLAST INTO THAT VIBRANIUM-- AND THIS ENTIRE COUNTRY GOES UP!
HALT IT NOW, DOCTOR!
9

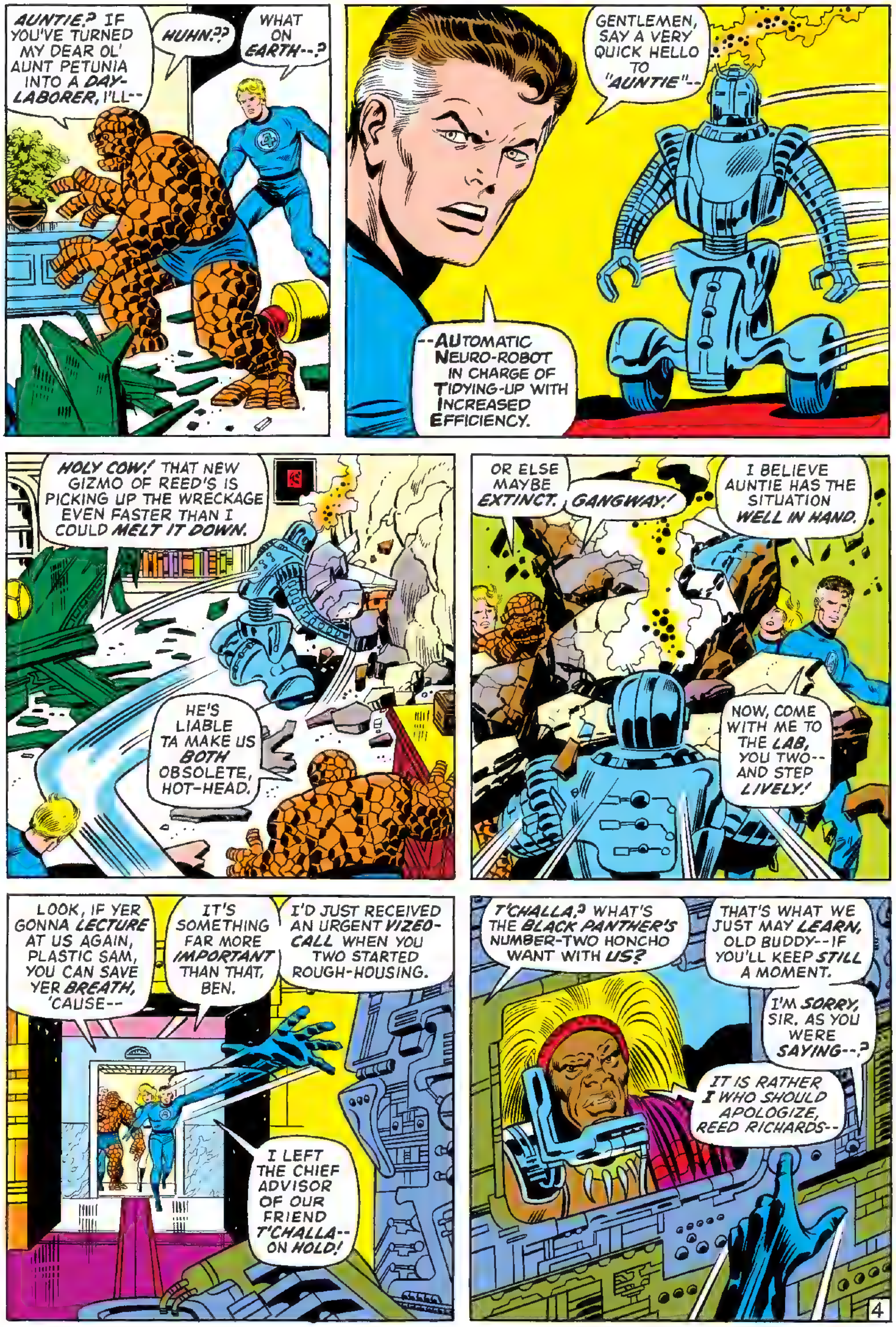

AND WHAT OF YOU, DOOM? HOW IMPORTANT IS THE VIBRANIUM-- IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO RISK YOUR LIFE?
OR-- IS THAT THE ONLY CONSIDERATION?
SO... THE PANTHER HAS ESCAPED HIS CAGE-- AND HAS SHOWN HIS TEETH.
DOES THE METAL MEAN SO MUCH TO YOU, T'CHALLA?
ENOUGH-- TO DESTROY YOUR OWN PEOPLE?
WOULD IT END WITH STEALING OUR ORE, DOOM?
WOULDN'T SLAVERY BE THE VERY NEXT STEP?
WRONG, DOOM--TOO MANY OF US HAVE JUST LEFT THAT BEHIND...
AND IT'S SOMETHING--WE WOULDN'T WISH ON THE REST OF THE WORLD... AS YOU WOULD.
YOUR MOVE, DOOM. MAKE THE RIGHT ONE.
WHAT DO WE DO, HERR DOCTOR?
DO? WE DEPART-- AND PLAN FOR ANOTHER DAY.
DEAD MEN ARE NO USE TO ME.
A WISE MOVE... AND A LUCKY ONE.
WOULD I HAVE DONE IT? THANK GOD-- I'LL NEVER KNOW.
AND SO THE TEST SEEMS WON, T'CHALLA-- YET, IN TRUTH, WHO IS THE WINNER THIS DAY?
YOU-- WHOSE LAND HAS BEEN BY EARTHQUAKE TORN?
OR-- WAS THE WINNER DOOM... WHO RETURNS UNHARMED TO HIS SMALL EUROPEAN STATE OF LATVERIA... NEITHER TRIUMPHANT-- NOR DEFEATED.
ANY ONE OF MY WEAPONS COULD HAVE DISARMED T'CHALLA--
YET... WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE POINT? TRULY, AS A SLAVE HE WOULD BE USELESS--
BUT PERHAPS SOMEDAY --AS AN ALLY... YES, THERE WOULD BE A PLACE-- FIT FOR THE KING HE IS.
ANOTHER DAY, T'CHALLA... ANOTHER CAUSE!
NEXT ISSUE
DOOMSWORD!

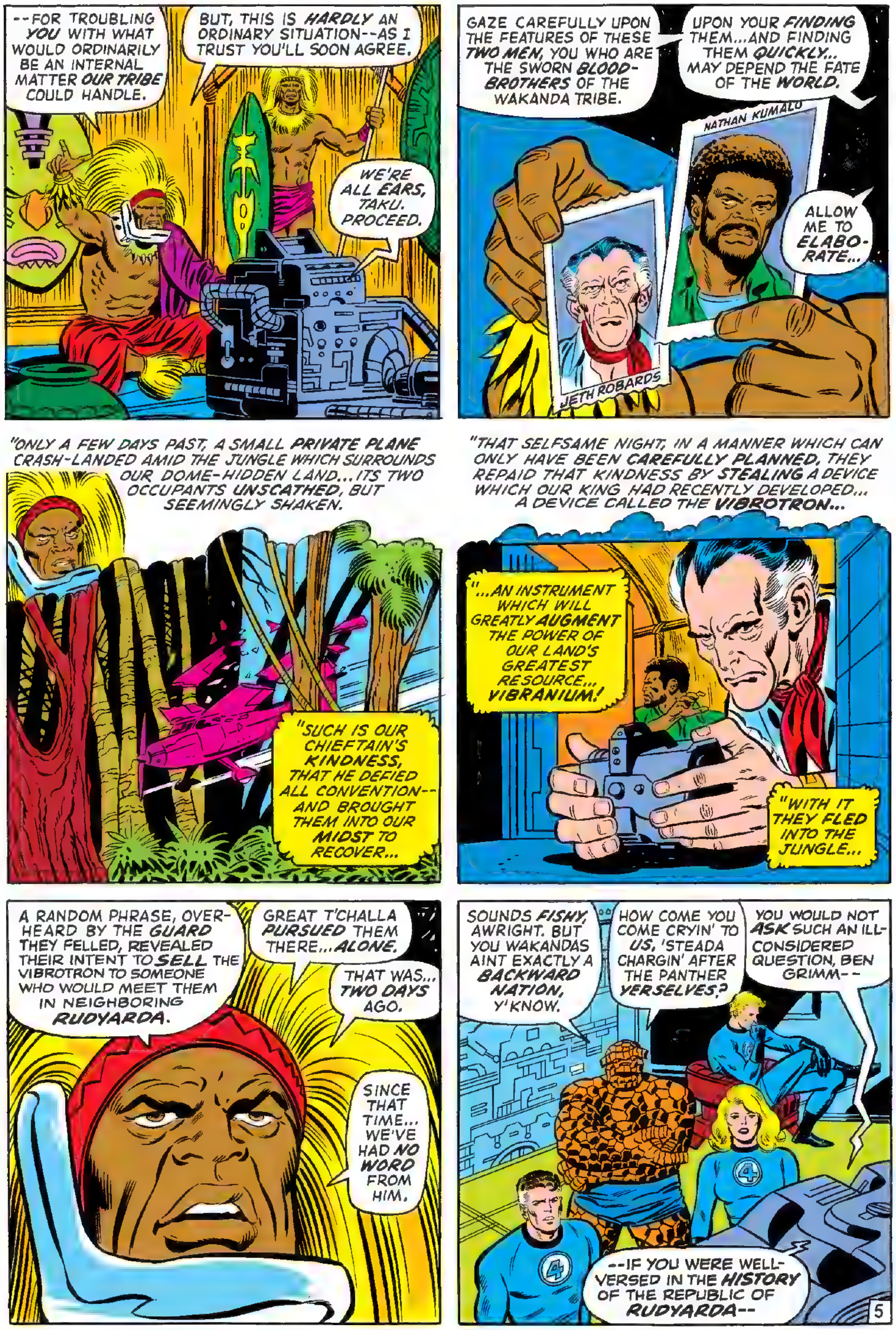
FANTASTIC FOUR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
119 FEB 02462
20¢
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FANTASTIC FOUR
T'CHALLA'S CHAINED UP IN THERE... AND WE'RE GONNA GET HIM OUT!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, HOT-HEAD...
..'CAUSE IT'S CLOBBERING TIME!!
THREE STAND TOGETHER.. OR DIE!

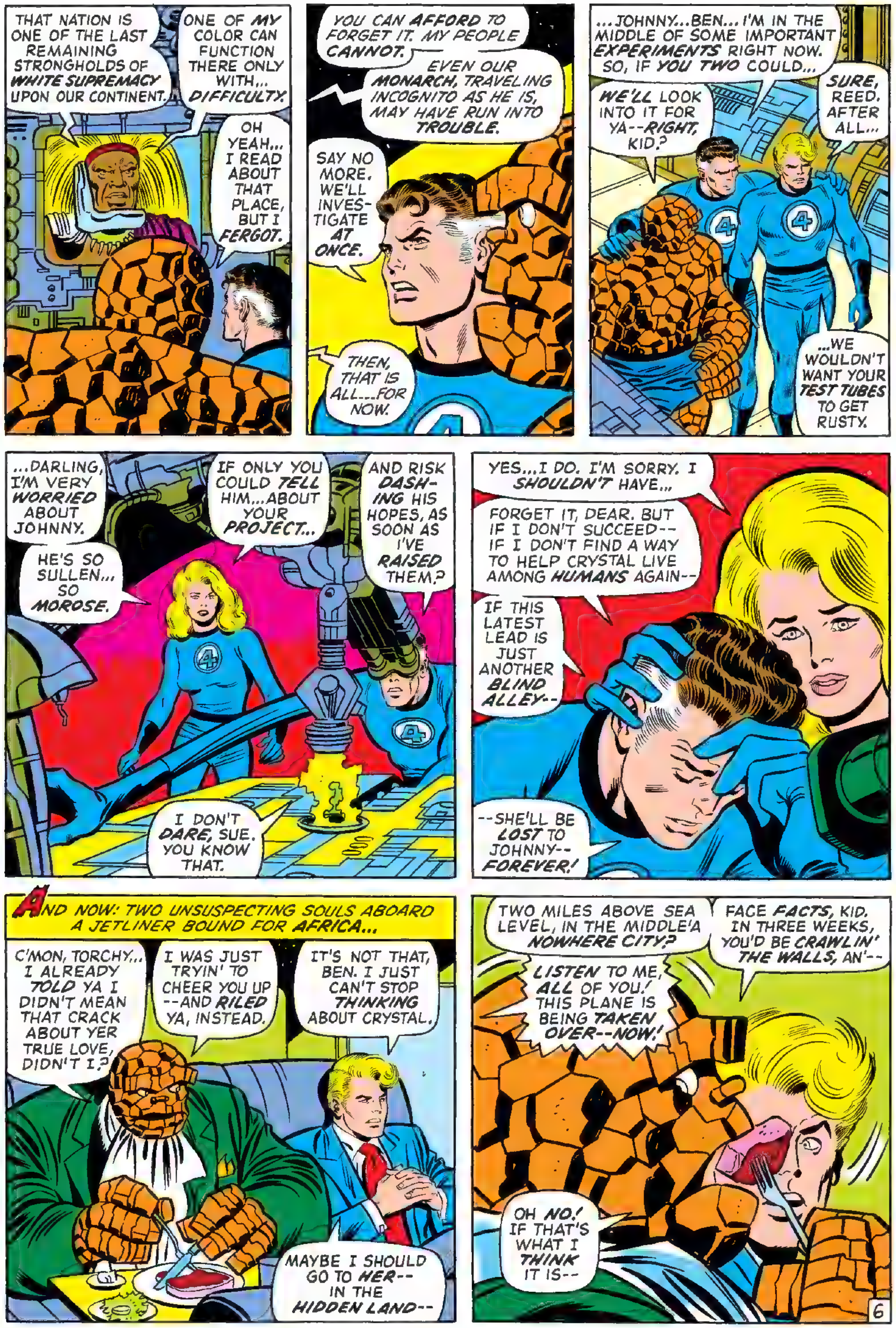
THE FABULOUS F.F. BATTLE FOR THE EARTH--AND FOR THE SOUL OF MAN!
THREE STOOD TOGETHER!
AN ARCHETYPICAL AUTUMN AFTERNOON: THEN SUDDENLY, THE BLISSFUL NOVEMBER QUIET IS RUDELY INTERRUPTED BY--
BEN-- FOR PETE'S SAKE-- CUT IT OUT!
NOT FOR PETE'S SAKE-- NOT FOR ANYBODY'S!
YOU'VE HAD IT, JUNIOR!
THRAKK!
STAN LEE EDITOR * ROY THOMAS WRITER * JOHN BUSCEMA ARTIST
JOE SINNOTT INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER


NOW YOU'VE DONE IT, YOU OVER-GROWN GORILLA.
THAT HUNK OF GRANITE MIGHT'VE MISSED ME--
--BUT IT'S NOT GONNA BE SO OBLIGING TO THE CROWDS IN THE STREET BELOW!
SPKAK!
ONLY CHANCE-- IS TO MELT IT BEFORE IT FALLS--LIKE SO.
'COURSE, THAT STILL LEAVES THE LITTLE MATTER OF A RAIN OF MOLTEN LAVA--
--WHICH IS DEFINITELY HAZARDOUS TO SOMEBODY'S HEALTH.
BUT, A FEW WELL-AIMED FIRE-BALLS--
--SHOULD FUNNEL IT INTO THOSE HUGE INDUSTRIAL CHIMNEYS--
--WHERE THE COMBINED HEAT WILL TURN THE WHOLE MISH-MOSH TO ASHES, FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY CHIMNEY-SWEEP.
OR, IF IT DOESN'T, IT'LL BE THE FIRST TIME THE AIR POLLUTED A FACTORY!
AND, NOW THAT THAT'S TAKEN CARE OF, GRUESOME--
--I'M GONNA MAKE YOU REGRET YOU EVER STARTED THIS FREE-FOR-ALL.
YOU GOT IT ALL BACK-WARD, MATCH-HEAD.
IT WAS YOU STARTED THIS RHUBARB.
2


I'M JUST THE GUY WHO'S GONNA FINISH--
WHA--?
YOU CAN'T EVEN FINISH A SENTENCE, UGLY.
BUT NOW, I'M THRU PLAYING AROUND.
YOU'VE HAD THIS COMIN' FOR A LONG TIME, PAL, SO--
HUH? SOME-THING STOPPED MY FIRE-BLASTS!
JUST LIKE YER CHIN'S GONNA STOP MY FIST, KIDDO--
--'CAUSE IT'S CLOBBERIN'--
--TIME--!
AWRIGHT-- WHO'S THE WISE GUY?
WHO'S THE WISE GUY??
THRUNCH!
I AM, BEN! THIS IN-GROUP BICKERING IS SOMETHING WE CAN'T AFFORD--NOT NOW.
THANKS FOR BLOCKING JOHNNY'S FLAMES WITH YOUR FORCE FIELD, DARLING.
I'M JUST GLAD THERE WAS NO REAL HARM DONE, REED.
BENJAMIN GRIMM--HOW COULD YOU ENDANGER THE PEOPLE BELOW BY KNOCKING OUT THAT WALL SECTION?
AW, I KNEW YER BURNED-UP BABY BROTHER HERE'D MELT IT DOWN, SUZIE.
BUT HE SHOULDN'TA GIVEN ME A HOT-FOOT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YEAH? WELL, I JUST DON'T HAPPEN TO LIKE YOUR BAD-MOUTHING MY GIRL CRYSTAL--AND THAT'S THAT!
HOLD IT, YOU TWO!
WORLD WAR THREE JUST ENDED, REMEMBER?
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TA SAY, STRETCHO.
YOU AINT THE POOR SLOB WHO'LL HAVETA CLEAN UP THIS WHOLE BLAMED MESS!
WHEN IT COMES TO THAT--NEITHER ARE YOU, BEN.
WE'LL LET AUNTIE TAKE CARE OF IT.
3

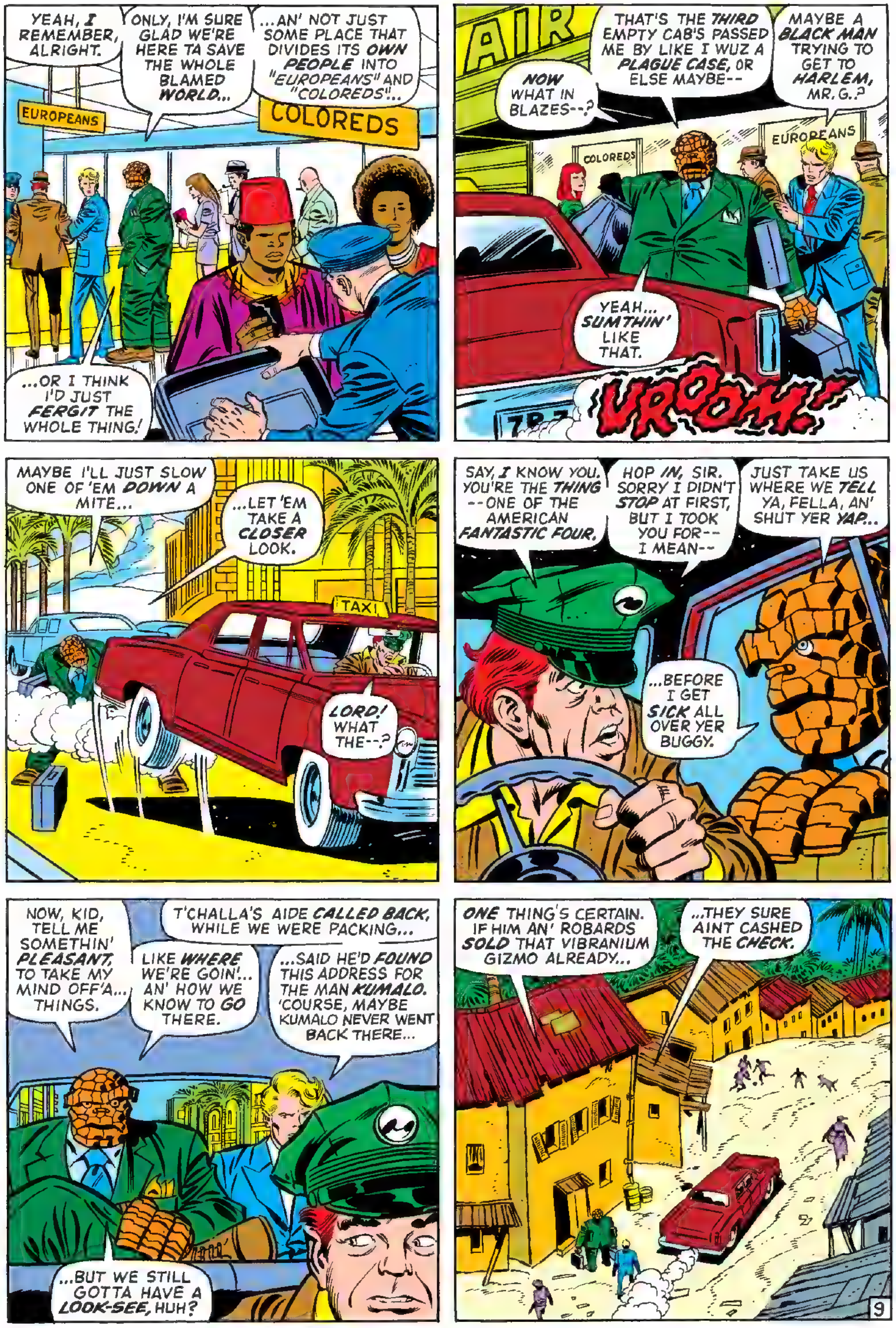

AUNTIE?? IF YOU'VE TURNED MY DEAR OL' AUNT PETUNIA INTO A DAY-LABORER, I'LL--
HUHN??
WHAT ON EARTH--?
GENTLEMEN, SAY A VERY QUICK HELLO TO "AUNTIE"--
--AUTOMATIC NEURO-ROBOT IN CHARGE OF TIDYING-UP WITH INCREASED EFFICIENCY.
HOLY COW! THAT NEW GIZMO OF REED'S IS PICKING UP THE WRECKAGE EVEN FASTER THAN I COULD MELT IT DOWN.
HE'S LIABLE TA MAKE US BOTH OBSOLETE, HOT-HEAD.
OR ELSE MAYBE EXTINCT.
GANGWAY!
I BELIEVE AUNTIE HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND.
NOW, COME WITH ME TO THE LAB, YOU TWO--AND STEP LIVELY!
LOOK, IF YER GONNA LECTURE AT US AGAIN, PLASTIC SAM, YOU CAN SAVE YER BREATH, 'CAUSE--
IT'S SOMETHING FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT, BEN.
I'D JUST RECEIVED AN URGENT VIZEO-CALL WHEN YOU TWO STARTED ROUGH-HOUSING.
I LEFT THE CHIEF ADVISOR OF OUR FRIEND T'CHALLA--ON HOLD!
T'CHALLA?? WHAT'S THE BLACK PANTHER'S NUMBER-TWO HONCHO WANT WITH US?
THAT'S WHAT WE JUST MAY LEARN, OLD BUDDY--IF YOU'LL KEEP STILL A MOMENT.
I'M SORRY, SIR. AS YOU WERE SAYING--?
IT IS RATHER I WHO SHOULD APOLOGIZE, REED RICHARDS--
4


--FOR TROUBLING YOU WITH WHAT WOULD ORDINARILY BE AN INTERNAL MATTER OUR TRIBE COULD HANDLE.
BUT, THIS IS HARDLY AN ORDINARY SITUATION--AS I TRUST YOU'LL SOON AGREE.
WE'RE ALL EARS, TAKU. PROCEED.
GAZE CAREFULLY UPON THE FEATURES OF THESE TWO MEN, YOU WHO ARE THE SWORN BLOOD-BROTHERS OF THE WAKANDA TRIBE.
UPON YOUR FINDING THEM...AND FINDING THEM QUICKLY... MAY DEPEND THE FATE OF THE WORLD.
NATHAN KUMALO
JETH ROBARDS
ALLOW ME TO ELABORATE...
"ONLY A FEW DAYS PAST, A SMALL PRIVATE PLANE CRASH-LANDED AMID THE JUNGLE WHICH SURROUNDS OUR DOME-HIDDEN LAND...ITS TWO OCCUPANTS UNSCATHED, BUT SEEMINGLY SHAKEN.
"SUCH IS OUR CHIEFTAIN'S KINDNESS, THAT HE DEFIED ALL CONVENTION--AND BROUGHT THEM INTO OUR MIDST TO RECOVER...
"THAT SELFSAME NIGHT, IN A MANNER WHICH CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY PLANNED, THEY REPAID THAT KINDNESS BY STEALING A DEVICE WHICH OUR KING HAD RECENTLY DEVELOPED... A DEVICE CALLED THE VIBROTRON...
"...AN INSTRUMENT WHICH WILL GREATLY AUGMENT THE POWER OF OUR LAND'S GREATEST RESOURCE... VIBRANIUM!
"WITH IT THEY FLED INTO THE JUNGLE...
A RANDOM PHRASE, OVER-HEARD BY THE GUARD THEY FELLED, REVEALED THEIR INTENT TO SELL THE VIBROTRON TO SOMEONE WHO WOULD MEET THEM IN NEIGHBORING RUDYARDA.
GREAT T'CHALLA PURSUED THEM THERE...ALONE.
THAT WAS... TWO DAYS AGO.
SINCE THAT TIME... WE'VE HAD NO WORD FROM HIM.
SOUNDS FISHY, AWRIGHT. BUT YOU WAKANDAS AINT EXACTLY A BACKWARD NATION, Y'KNOW.
HOW COME YOU COME CRYIN' TO US, 'STEADA CHARGIN' AFTER THE PANTHER YERSELVES?
YOU WOULD NOT ASK SUCH AN ILL-CONSIDERED QUESTION, BEN GRIMM--
--IF YOU WERE WELL-VERSED IN THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RUDYARDA--
5


THAT NATION IS ONE OF THE LAST REMAINING STRONGHOLDS OF WHITE SUPREMACY UPON OUR CONTINENT.
ONE OF MY COLOR CAN FUNCTION THERE ONLY WITH... DIFFICULTY.
OH YEAH... I READ ABOUT THAT PLACE, BUT I FERGOT.
YOU CAN AFFORD TO FORGET IT. MY PEOPLE CANNOT.
EVEN OUR MONARCH, TRAVELING INCOGNITO AS HE IS, MAY HAVE RUN INTO TROUBLE.
SAY NO MORE. WE'LL INVES-TIGATE AT ONCE.
THEN, THAT IS ALL...FOR NOW.
...JOHNNY...BEN... I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME IMPORTANT EXPERIMENTS RIGHT NOW. SO, IF YOU TWO COULD...
WE'LL LOOK INTO IT FOR YA--RIGHT, KID?
SURE, REED. AFTER ALL...
...WE WOULDN'T WANT YOUR TEST TUBES TO GET RUSTY.
...DARLING, I'M VERY WORRIED ABOUT JOHNNY.
HE'S SO SULLEN... SO MOROSE.
IF ONLY YOU COULD TELL HIM...ABOUT YOUR PROJECT...
AND RISK DASH-ING HIS HOPES, AS SOON AS I'VE RAISED THEM?
I DON'T DARE, SUE. YOU KNOW THAT.
YES...I DO. I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
FORGET IT, DEAR. BUT IF I DON'T SUCCEED-- IF I DON'T FIND A WAY TO HELP CRYSTAL LIVE AMONG HUMANS AGAIN--
IF THIS LATEST LEAD IS JUST ANOTHER BLIND ALLEY--
--SHE'LL BE LOST TO JOHNNY--FOREVER!
AND NOW: TWO UNSUSPECTING SOULS ABOARD A JETLINER BOUND FOR AFRICA...
C'MON, TORCHY... I ALREADY TOLD YA I DIDN'T MEAN THAT CRACK ABOUT YER TRUE LOVE, DIDN'T I?
I WAS JUST TRYIN' TO CHEER YOU UP --AND RILED YA, INSTEAD.
IT'S NOT THAT, BEN. I JUST CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT CRYSTAL.
MAYBE I SHOULD GO TO HER-- IN THE HIDDEN LAND--
TWO MILES ABOVE SEA LEVEL, IN THE MIDDLE'A NOWHERE CITY?
FACE FACTS, KID. IN THREE WEEKS, YOU'D BE CRAWLIN' THE WALLS, AN'--
LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU! THIS PLANE IS BEING TAKEN OVER--NOW!
OH NO! IF THAT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS--
6

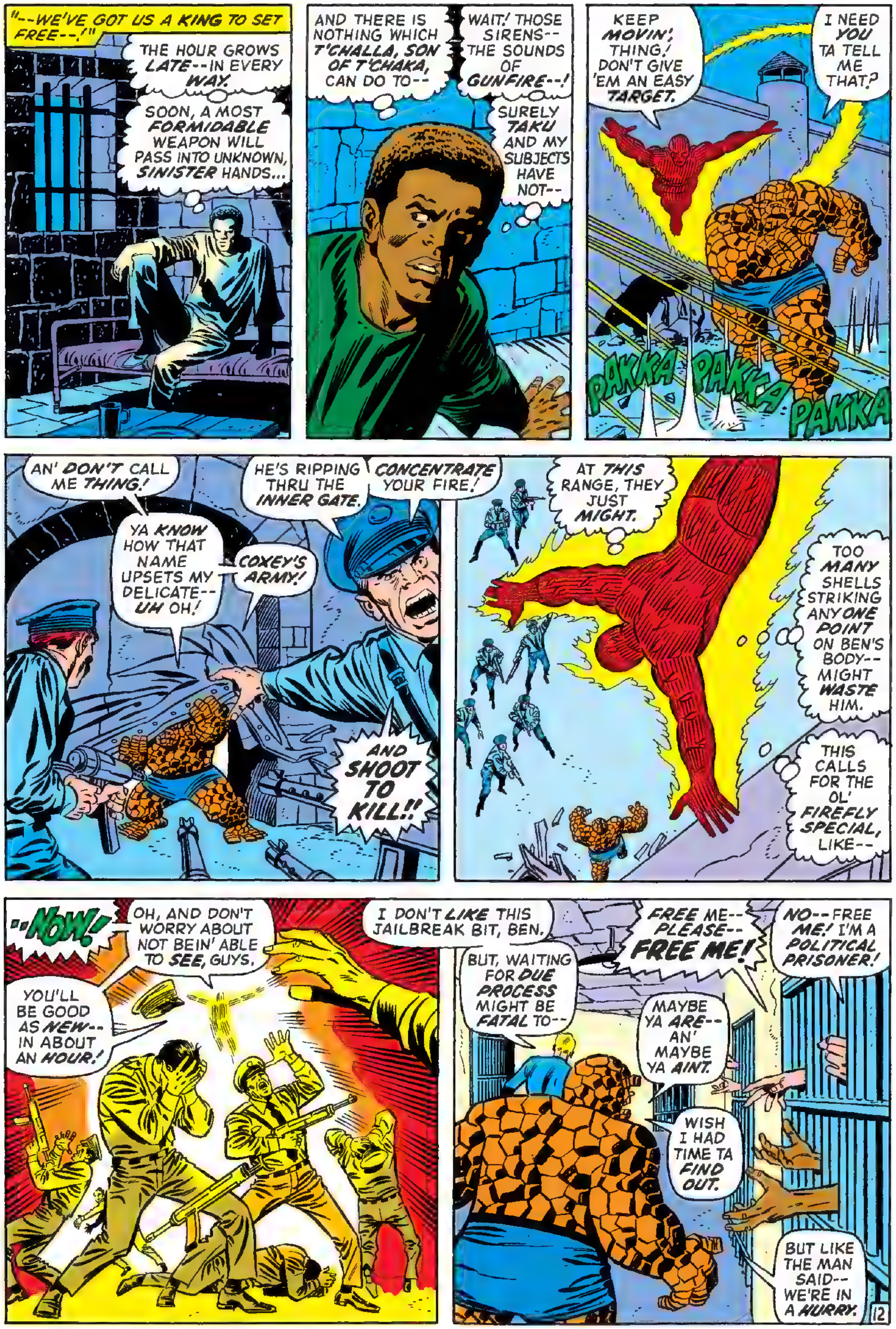
IT IS! A SKYJACKING!
JUST SIT STILL EVERYBODY-- AND NOBODY GETS HURT!
THE LITTLE LADY AN' ME ARE TAKIN' A WALK UP FRONT-- AND THEN THIS CRATE IS HEADING FOR CUBA--
--OR ELSE!
DON'T TRY TO STOP HIM, ANY OF YOU!
HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS--AND HE'S GOT A GUN!
DON'T WANT TO ENDANGER THE STEW-- BUT IF I CAN JUST EDGE IN A BIT CLOSER--
NOW CALM DOWN, FELLA. LET'S TALK THIS OVER--!
TAKE ONE MORE STEP, BRAT, AND I START THROWIN' HOT LEAD!
ZPAK!
YOU WANT HOT LEAD--?
YOU ASKED FOR THIS, PAL.
--YOU GOT HOT LEAD!
YEEEOW! MY ROD--MELTED-- LIKE IT WAS MADE OUTTA BUTTER!
DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID THAT, HOUDINI--
BUT I GOT ANOTHER ACE UP MY SLEEVE--
AN' THIS ONE, NO MAGICIAN'S-TRICK IS GONNA MELT!

WHA--? A GRENADE!
IF I DON'T GET TO CUBA, AINT NOBODY IN THIS PLANE GOIN' NOWHERE!
AND I DO MEAN NOWH-- HUH?
GIMME THAT PINE-APPLE, CREEP, BEFORE I--
UH OH!
YOU'RE TOO LATE, BIG BOY! TOO LATE!
KLUNK!
I DON'T DARE USE A FIRE-BLAST ON THAT THING, OR IT'LL BLOW A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE PLANE.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS--
BEN!
I HEAR YA, SPORT. I HEAR YA.
HOW COME, SOON AS IT'S CRISIS TIME...
...EVERYBODY'S BASHFUL BENJY'S BUDDY AGAIN!
FROOMF!
AS FOR YOU, BUSTER--IF I WASN'T SCARED'A DENTIN' THE PLANE, I'D--
SAVE YOUR BREATH. CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S JUST A CRAZED FANATIC?
THOUGH, IF THERE'S ANYTHING LOWER THAN MENACING A PLANE-LOAD OF INNOCENT PEOPLE--
--I HOPE I NEVER LIVE TO SEE IT!
THEN, FOLLOWING A LESS EVENTFUL SECOND HALF OF THE TRIP...
COME ON, BEN... BEFORE WE GET HELP UP IN CUSTOMS.
I WAS JUST THANK-ING MR. GRIMM ONE LAST TIME...
SKIP IT, LADY. PLAYIN' HERO IS JUST LIKE A KNEE-JERK TO TORCHY AN' ME.
MOVE IT, BEN-- WE'VE GOT A MISSION HERE, REMEMBER?
8.


YEAH, I REMEMBER, ALRIGHT.
ONLY, I'M SURE GLAD WE'RE HERE TA SAVE THE WHOLE BLAMED WORLD...
...AN' NOT JUST SOME PLACE THAT DIVIDES ITS OWN PEOPLE INTO "EUROPEANS" AND "COLOREDS"!...
EUROPEANS
COLOREDS
...OR I THINK I'D JUST FERGIT THE WHOLE THING!
THAT'S THE THIRD EMPTY CAB'S PASSED ME BY LIKE I WUZ A PLAGUE CASE, OR ELSE MAYBE--
MAYBE A BLACK MAN TRYING TO GET TO HARLEM, MR. G.?
NOW WHAT IN BLAZES--?
AIR
COLOREDS
EUROPEANS
YEAH... SUMTHIN' LIKE THAT.
VROOM!
MAYBE I'LL JUST SLOW ONE OF 'EM DOWN A MITE...
...LET 'EM TAKE A CLOSER LOOK.
TAXI
LORD! WHAT THE--?
SAY, I KNOW YOU. YOU'RE THE THING --ONE OF THE AMERICAN FANTASTIC FOUR.
HOP IN, SIR. SORRY I DIDN'T STOP AT FIRST, BUT I TOOK YOU FOR-- I MEAN--
JUST TAKE US WHERE WE TELL YA, FELLA, AN' SHUT YER YAP...
...BEFORE I GET SICK ALL OVER YER BUGGY.
T'CHALLA'S AIDE CALLED BACK, WHILE WE WERE PACKING...
NOW, KID, TELL ME SOMETHIN' PLEASANT, TO TAKE MY MIND OFF'A... THINGS.
LIKE WHERE WE'RE GOIN'... AN' HOW WE KNOW TO GO THERE.
...SAID HE'D FOUND THIS ADDRESS FOR THE MAN KUMALO. 'COURSE, MAYBE KUMALO NEVER WENT BACK THERE...
...BUT WE STILL GOTTA HAVE A LOOK-SEE, HUH?
ONE THING'S CERTAIN. IF HIM AN' ROBARDS SOLD THAT VIBRANIUM GIZMO ALREADY...
...THEY SURE AINT CASHED THE CHECK.
9

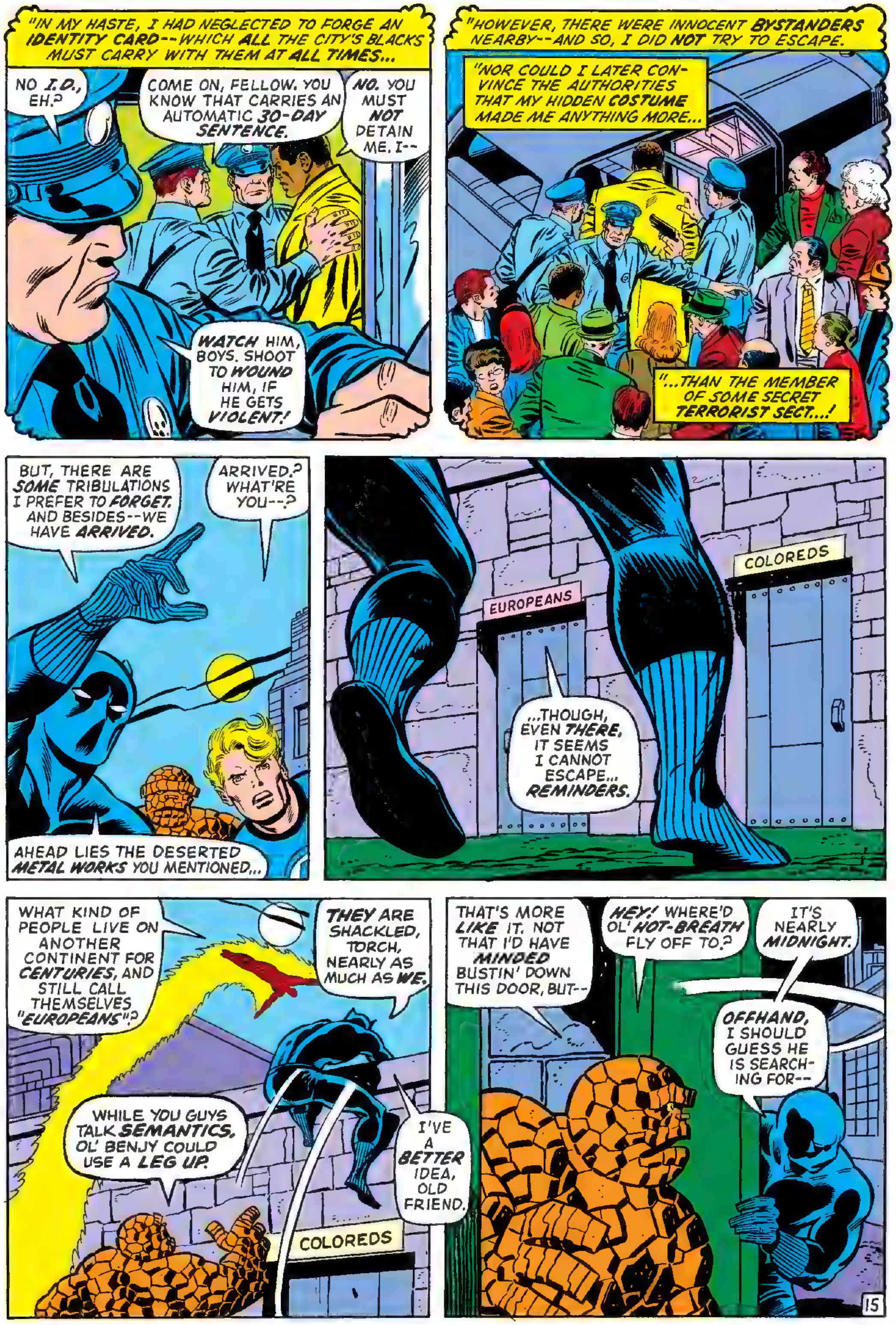
...WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU FOR A MOMENT, IF WE COULD, SIR.
YOU ARE MR. NATHAN KUMALO, AREN'T YOU?
THAT'S HIM, OKAY. I RECOGNIZE HIM FROM HIS PITCHER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--EITHER OF YOU.
NOW, GET AWAY FROM MY DOOR, BEFORE I--
BEFORE YOU WHAT, SEYMOUR?
YOU GONNA CUT YERSELF, AN' BLEED ALL OVER US?
PLEASE--DON'T HIT ME--I--
I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE--AND I'LL TELL YOU EVERY-THING!
YOU GIVE UP AWFUL EASY, PAL.
HOW COME?
BECAUSE MY PARTNER DOUBLE-CROSSED ME, THAT'S WHY!
HE TOOK THE INVENTION WE STOLE TOGETHER--AND, AS A BLACK, I CAN ONLY FESTER HERE, IN THIS SINKHOLE.
I FEEL FOR YA, BUDDY, BUT I CAN'T REACH YA.
SO WHO'S HE SELLIN' IT TO? NAMES AN' DATES!
EVEN WE DO NOT KNOW THE BUYER'S IDENTITY--BUT ROBARDS IS TO MEET HIM TONIGHT...
AT THE ABANDONED METAL WORKS ON THE EDGE OF THE CITY...
...AT MIDNIGHT.
YOU BETTER BE TELLIN' IT STRAIGHT, KUMALO.
NOW WHAT ABOUT T'CHALLA--THE MAN YOU BETRAYED?
YOU WON'T BE SEEING HIM AGAIN SO SOON, AMERICANS.
HE'S ROTTING INSIDE CITY PRISON RIGHT THIS MINUTE...
...AND IT'S GOT WALLS THREE FEET THICK!
10

THEN, AS A STARTLED TWOSOME MULL OVER THAT LITTLE BOMBSHELL...
WELL, BEN? DO WE BELIEVE HIM, OR DON'T WE?
AW, HE'S TOO CHICKEN TO BE PUTTIN' US ON. I VOTE WE--
YOU'RE GOING TO DO NOTHING, EITHER OF YOU!
I'VE TAKEN ENOUGH OFF WHITE MEN TO LAST ME A LIFETIME.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO DIE--
--RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW--IN THIS DINGY HOLE THAT YOUR KIND EXILED ME TO!
YER GONNA PUT THE KIBOSH ON AUNT PETUNIA'S FAVORITE NEPHEW?
--HERE, IN A PLACE AINT EVEN BEEN CLEANED IN A YEAR?
WHY, FACT IS, THIS WHOLE PLACE IS SO BLAMED DUSTY--THAT I'M PLUMB--ABOUT--TO--
AAAAAA
CHOOOOOO!
BLAAM!
DON'T BOTHER TO GIT UP, PAL. WE KNOW THE WAY OUT.
BUT IF YOU TOL' US ANY TALL TALES--YOU BETTER START PACKIN'.
Y-YOU'RE--NOT GOING TO--PUT ME IN PRISON--?
YOU'RE ALREADY IN ONE, KUMALO--OR HADN'T YOU NOTICED?
C'MON, BEN--
11

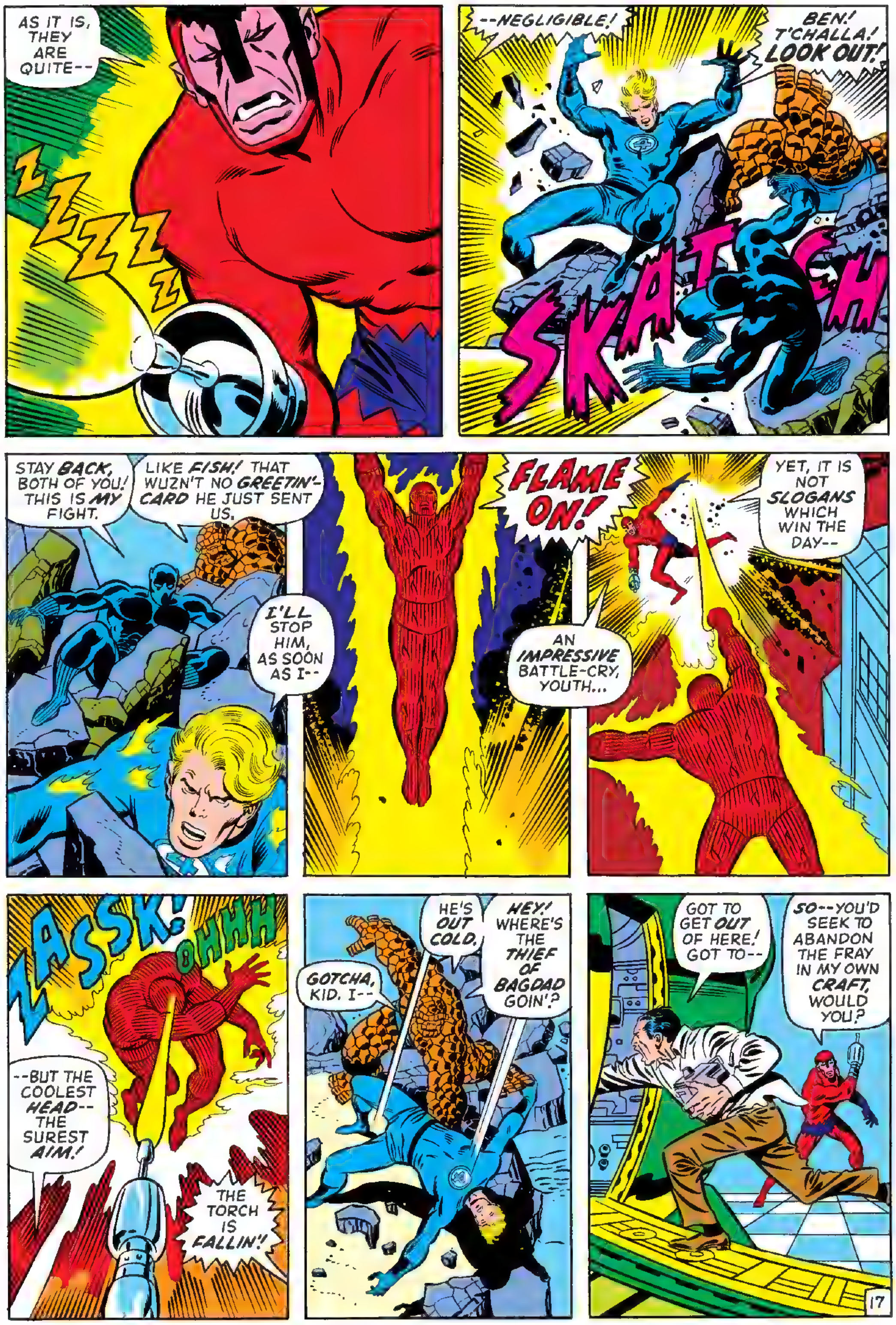

"--WE'VE GOT US A KING TO SET FREE--!"
THE HOUR GROWS LATE--IN EVERY WAY.
SOON, A MOST FORMIDABLE WEAPON WILL PASS INTO UNKNOWN, SINISTER HANDS...
AND THERE IS NOTHING WHICH T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA, CAN DO TO--
WAIT! THOSE SIRENS--THE SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE--!
SURELY TAKU AND MY SUBJECTS HAVE NOT--
KEEP MOVIN', THING! DON'T GIVE 'EM AN EASY TARGET.
I NEED YOU TA TELL ME THAT?
PAKKA PAKKA PAKKA
AN' DON'T CALL ME THING!
YA KNOW HOW THAT NAME UPSETS MY DELICATE--UH OH!
HE'S RIPPING THRU THE INNER GATE.
CONCENTRATE YOUR FIRE!
COXEY'S ARMY!
AND SHOOT TO KILL!!
AT THIS RANGE, THEY JUST MIGHT.
TOO MANY SHELLS STRIKING ANY ONE POINT ON BEN'S BODY--MIGHT WASTE HIM.
THIS CALLS FOR THE OL' FIREFLY SPECIAL, LIKE--
"NOW!"
OH, AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT NOT BEIN' ABLE TO SEE, GUYS.
YOU'LL BE GOOD AS NEW--IN ABOUT AN HOUR!
I DON'T LIKE THIS JAILBREAK BIT, BEN.
BUT, WAITING FOR DUE PROCESS MIGHT BE FATAL TO--
FREE ME--PLEASE--FREE ME!
NO--FREE ME! I'M A POLITICAL PRISONER!
MAYBE YA ARE--AN' MAYBE YA AIN'T.
WISH I HAD TIME TA FIND OUT.
BUT LIKE THE MAN SAID--WE'RE IN A HURRY.
12

LET'S FIND THE PANTHER AN' CLEAR OUTTA HERE, KIDDO. THIS HOOSEGOW BUGS ME.
IT'S STARTED ME THINKIN' AGAIN, AN' I DON'T--
JOHNNY STORM! BEN GRIMM! HOW--?
CAN'T STOP TO EXPLAIN, T'CHALLA.
HOPE IT DOESN'T TOAST YOU, BUT I'M MELTING THESE BARS FAST--WITH MY WHOLE BODY.
TOO MUCH AT STAKE TO DO IT THE SAFE WAY, WITH JUST MY HAND.
THEN--YOU KNOW EVERY-THING!?
FRANKLY, JUNGLE MAN, I'M STILL PRETTY FUZZY ON A COUPLE'A POINTS--
--BUT THIS AINT THE TIME OR PLACE FOR A POW-WOW.
TWO MORE GUARDS COMIN' THIS WAY--AND THEY'RE LOADED FOR BEAR.
GET OUT OF SIGHT OVER THERE, T'CHALLA.
BEN AND I WILL--
YOU HAVE DONE ENOUGH, TORCH.
DO NOT SEEK TO DO ALL MY FIGHTING FOR ME.
SOME THINGS, AFTER ALL, ARE BEST LEFT TO--
--THE BLACK LEOPARD!
13

...THANK YOU, MY FRIENDS, FOR ALLOWING ME THIS DETOUR, TO RETRIEVE MY CEREMONIAL ATTIRE.
AT THIS STAGE IN MY LIFE, I FEEL QUITE NAKED WITHOUT IT.
NOW ABOUT THE DEVICE WE SEEK--
FIRST THINGS FIRST, YER HIGHNESS.
HOW COME YOU CALLED YERSELF THE BLACK LEOPARD BACK THERE, 'STEAD'A THE PANTHER?
I CONTEMPLATE A RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRY, BEN GRIMM, WHERE THE LATTER TERM HAS--POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS.
HENCE, THE NEW NAME --A MINOR POINT, AT BEST, SINCE THE PANTHER IS A LEOPARD.
I NEITHER CONDEMN NOR CONDONE THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN UP THE NAME-- BUT T'CHALLA IS A LAW UNTO HIMSELF.
SHEESH! MIGHT AS WELL HAVE OL' LONG-WINDED REED HERE WITH US!
COAST'S CLEAR. LET'S SPLIT!
...MADE IT!
YOU WUZ SAYIN', KINGY?
AS YOU KNOW, THE STOLEN DEVICE VASTLY INCREASES THE POWER AND RANGE OF VIBRANIUM.
IN ITS NATURAL STATE, THAT RARE METAL ABSORBS VIBRATIONS-- STORES THEM LIKE A BATTERY-- BUT--
A CAR APPROACHES. KEEP BACK!
NO SWEAT. TELL US MORE.
MY VIBROTRON WAS DESIGNED TO UTILIZE THAT STORED POWER--
--TO DISINTEGRATE ANY METAL AT WHICH IT WAS AIMED!
HEY, HOTHEAD--DIDN'T DAREDEVIL TELL US ABOUT SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, DOWN IN KA-ZAR'S BACK YARD?
THE HIDDEN JUNGLE'S ANTI-METAL IS BUT AN ALLOY OF VIBRANIUM, BEN GRIMM.
EITHER OF THEM, USED IN MY VIBROTRON, COULD MAKE THE NATION WHICH CONTROLS IT SUPREME ON THIS PLANET!
SO WHY'D THE LOCALS JAIL YOU-- INSTEAD OF HELPING YOU HUNT?
TRADITION CAN BE A STRONGER CHAIN THAN EVEN NECESSITY, JOHNNY...
"I KNEW THAT--WHICH IS WHY I ENTERED BOTH NATION AND CITY STEALTHILY--AND INCONSPICUOUSLY--
THOSE TWO THIEVES WILL WISH TO DISPOSE OF THE VIBROTRON QUICKLY.
IF ROBARDS HAS IT, HE WOULD BE IN THIS PART OF THE CITY--AND I MUST FIND HIM!
I MUST!!
"BUT, I HAD MADE ONE FATAL ERROR...


"IN MY HASTE, I HAD NEGLECTED TO FORGE AN IDENTITY CARD--WHICH ALL THE CITY'S BLACKS MUST CARRY WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES...
NO I.D., EH.?
COME ON, FELLOW. YOU KNOW THAT CARRIES AN AUTOMATIC 30-DAY SENTENCE.
NO. YOU MUST NOT DETAIN ME. I--
WATCH HIM, BOYS. SHOOT TO WOUND HIM, IF HE GETS VIOLENT!
"HOWEVER, THERE WERE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS NEARBY--AND SO, I DID NOT TRY TO ESCAPE.
"NOR COULD I LATER CONVINCE THE AUTHORITIES THAT MY HIDDEN COSTUME MADE ME ANYTHING MORE...
"...THAN THE MEMBER OF SOME SECRET TERRORIST SECT...!
BUT, THERE ARE SOME TRIBULATIONS I PREFER TO FORGET. AND BESIDES--WE HAVE ARRIVED.
ARRIVED.? WHAT'RE YOU--?
AHEAD LIES THE DESERTED METAL WORKS YOU MENTIONED...
COLOREDS
EUROPEANS
...THOUGH, EVEN THERE, IT SEEMS I CANNOT ESCAPE... REMINDERS.
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE LIVE ON ANOTHER CONTINENT FOR CENTURIES, AND STILL CALL THEMSELVES "EUROPEANS"?
THEY ARE SHACKLED, TORCH, NEARLY AS MUCH AS WE.
WHILE YOU GUYS TALK SEMANTICS, OL' BENJY COULD USE A LEG UP.
I'VE A BETTER IDEA, OLD FRIEND.
COLOREDS
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT. NOT THAT I'D HAVE MINDED BUSTIN' DOWN THIS DOOR, BUT--
HEY! WHERE'D OL' HOT-BREATH FLY OFF TO.?
IT'S NEARLY MIDNIGHT.
OFFHAND, I SHOULD GUESS HE IS SEARCHING FOR--
15

JETH ROBARDS, I PRESUME?!
WHATSA-MATTER? CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
THEN MAYBE WHAT IT TAKES TO LOOSEN IT IS A BLACK PA--ER, BLACK LEOPARD!
NO--NO! STAY BACK! K-KEEP THOSE FLAMES AWAY FROM ME!!
HMMM...IT SEEMS YOU POSSESS NEITHER RAW COURAGE--
--NOR EVEN THE SKILL TO UTILIZE THE VERY WEAPON YOU STOLE AGAINST US.
YOU DID NOT MASTERMIND THE THEFT OF VIBROTRON, ROBARDS.
NO? THEN WHO DID?
I--I DON'T KNOW. I--
AWFUL FERGITFUL, AINTCHA? MAYBE A BITE'A THIS KNUCKLE SANDWICH WILL--
HOLD, BEN GRIMM!
LIKE HIS FRIEND, HE IS FAR TOO CRAVEN TO WITHHOLD ANY-THING FROM US.
I THINK HE TRULY DOES NOT KNOW.
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND THIS--AND SOON.
HEADS UP!
A HELICOPTER --DESCENDING FROM THE NIGHT SKY!
YET--IT MOVES WITHOUT SOUND.
OF COURSE! I SHOULD HAVE SENSED IT BEFORE.
ONLY ONE MAN IS THE TOTAL MASTER OF SOUND--HAS PREVIOUS KNOW-LEDGE OF WAKANDA LAND--
--AND LOATHES ME ENOUGH TO RISK HIS ALL FOR VENGEANCE AGAINST ME!
THE MAN CALLED--KLAW!*
A PITY YOU DID NOT SEE MY HAND IN THIS AFFAIR EARLIER, DEAR T'CHALLA.
SUCH FORESIGHT MIGHT HAVE MINUTELY ENHANCED YOUR PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL.
*FIRST MUTATED THUS IN #56. --STAN.
16


AS IT IS, THEY ARE QUITE--
--NEGLIGIBLE!
BEN! T'CHALLA! LOOK OUT!
SKATCH
STAY BACK, BOTH OF YOU! THIS IS MY FIGHT.
LIKE FISH! THAT WUZN'T NO GREETIN'-CARD HE JUST SENT US.
I'LL STOP HIM, AS SOON AS I--
FLAME ON!
AN IMPRESSIVE BATTLE-CRY, YOUTH...
YET, IT IS NOT SLOGANS WHICH WIN THE DAY--
ZASSK!
OHHH
--BUT THE COOLEST HEAD--THE SUREST AIM!
THE TORCH IS FALLIN'!
GOTCHA, KID. I--
HE'S OUT COLD.
HEY! WHERE'S THE THIEF OF BAGDAD GOIN'?
GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! GOT TO--
SO--YOU'D SEEK TO ABANDON THE FRAY IN MY OWN CRAFT, WOULD YOU?

THEN, EXIT CRAFT--AND EXIT ROBARDS!
ZAK!
YER A REAL MEAN CUSS, AINTCHA?
WELL, HOW DO YA WANT IT? STANDIN' UP, OR RUNNIN' AWAY?
IT IS MUCH MORE MY NATURE--TO GIVE!
I PREFER NOT TO RECEIVE AT ALL, GARGOYLE.
SZZISST!
AMAZING! I HURL A VERY MOUNTAIN OF ROCK AND CONCRETE AT YOU--
--AND STILL YOU PLOW FORWARD, LIKE SOME MAMMOTH SALMON.
BUT, IT MATTERS NOT.
I SHALL CONTINUE THIS DEADLY HAIL--
--WITH CONCRETE, MORTAR, AND SONIC BLASTS ALL AT ONCE--
ZZZZZ
--TILL YOU ARE SURROUNDED, ENGULFED, BY CRAGGY, BONE-CRUSHING DEBRIS!
UNNH!
HE IS FINISHED AT LAST!
WHERE NOW YOUR FALSE BRAVADO, MONSTER?
BURIED WITH YOU, NO DOUBT, BENEATH TONS OF SHATTERED STONE.
IF BEN GRIMM IS DEAD, KLAW--YOU'LL PAY--
--AS NO MAN HAS EVER PAID BEFORE!
MMFFF!
BUT--KLAW IS NO LONGER A MAN, FOOL.
KLAW IS SOUND INCARNATE--A FORM OF PURE SONIC LIFE--
--OR HAD EVEN YOU FORGOTTEN THAT?
PZAP!
18

YOU, T'CHALLA! YOU CAUSED ME TO LOSE THIS ARM, SO MANY YEARS AGO.
I'VE WAITED LONG FOR THIS PRICELESS MOMENT--
AND, NOW THAT IT'S COME, I--
WHO'S THAT--BEHIND ME--?
KRRUNNCH!
WELL, I COULD BE A PIP-SQUEAK CALLED THE MOLE MAN...
OR, I COULD BE A LITTLE CAESAR NAMED TYRANNUS...
AN' THEN AGAIN, I COULD JUST BE...
...THE EVER-LOVIN', BLUE-EYED, BLASTER-BUSTIN' THING!
MY SONI-CLAW YOU'VE--DEMOLISHED IT!
BUT--IT WAS NO MERE WEAPON--NO INSTRUMENT OF LIFELESS STEEL.
IT WAS PART OF ME--OF MY OWN, SONICALLY-ALTERED BODY!
AND SOME HAVE VOWED THAT IT IS THE ONLY PART OF YOU WHICH HAS ANY MERIT.
WELL? DO YOU FEAR TO STAND AGAINST EVEN A WOUNDED T'CHALLA, BEREFT OF YOUR WEAPON?
I FEAR NOTHING, SWINE...
FOR, ITS JAGGED EDGES CAN STILL--
MISSED!
AS YOU YOURSELF HAVE SAID, KLAW...
IT IS THE COOLEST HEAD...
...THE SUREST AIM THAT WINS THE DAY!
FTAM
19

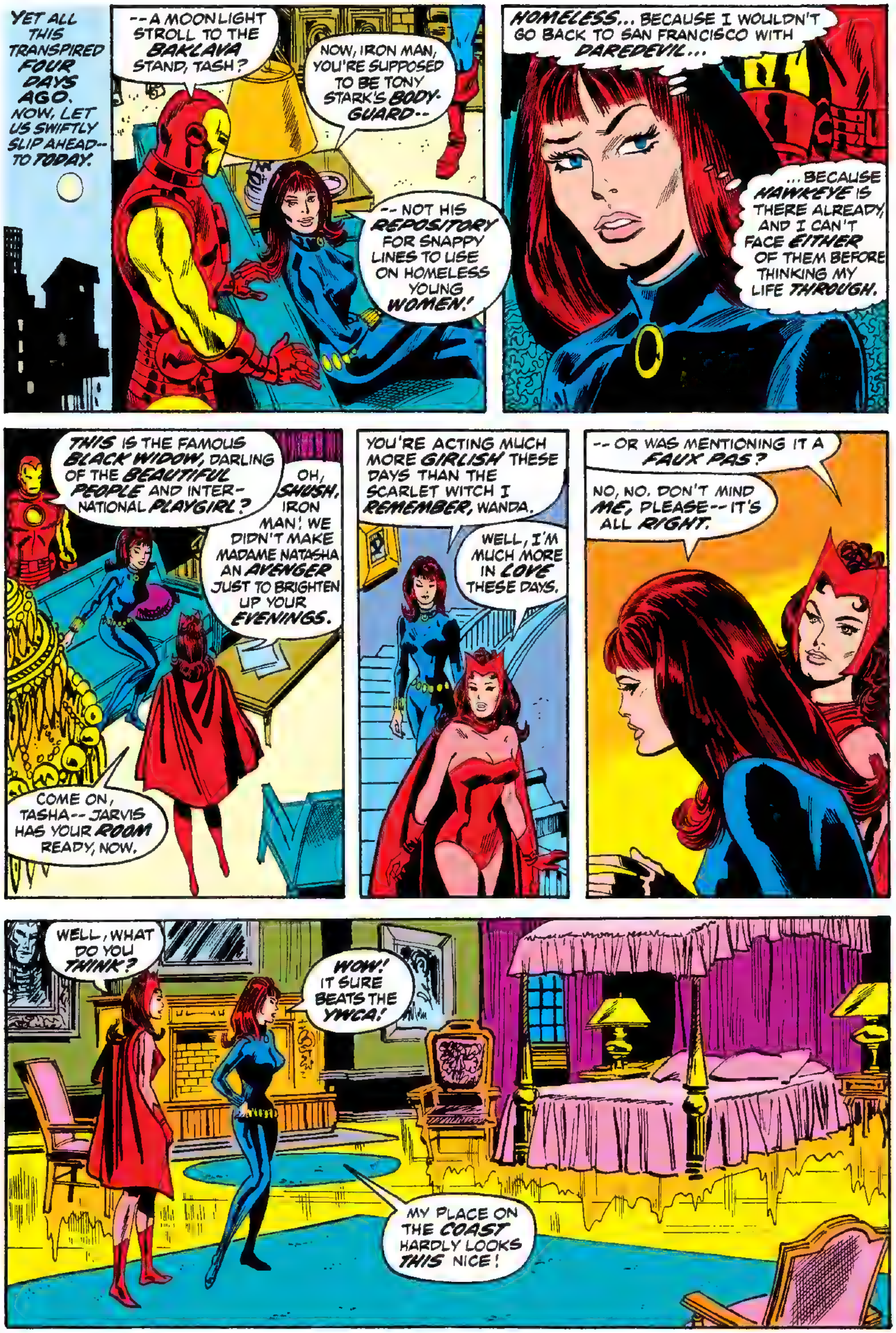
JUST THEN: EVEN A USELESS EDIFICE, IT SEEMS...
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
...MAY HAVE ITS CONTINGENT OF ARMED WATCHMEN!
BUT, A FEW SCARCE-NEEDED INTRODUCTIONS...A WORD OR TWO OF EXPLANATION, AND...
...WELL, MR. GRIMM, IT LOOKS AS IF THE WORLD OWES YOU AND MR. STORM A VOTE OF THANKS.
WHAT ABOUT--T'CHALLA?
I WANT NO THANKS, JOHNNY. I'M MERELY GLAD THE VIBROTRON WAS DESTROYED WHEN ROBARDS DIED.
UH...ACTUALLY, FELLOW...YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THIS PART OF TOWN... AFTER DARK, YOU KNOW.
I MEAN...I'M NOT GOING TO ASK YOU FOR AN I.D. OR ANYTHING, BUT...
LET'S GO, T'CHALLA ...KID...
BEAUTIFUL! YA BREAK YER BACK SAVIN' THE WHOLE GOL-DANG WORLD...
EUROPEANS
COLOREDS
...THEN YOU GOTTA WALK OUT... THRU SEPARATE-BUT-EQUAL DOORS!
KINDA MAKES YOU WONDER IF IT WAS WORTH IT, HUH?
LOOK, JUNIOR...I KNOW WE'RE ALREADY IN DUTCH AROUND HERE FOR THAT JAILBREAK SCENE...BUT...
I DIG, BEN.
GO ON... BEFORE I BEAT YOU TO IT.
EUROPEANS
I BEEN WANTIN' TA DO THIS...
SKRUTCH!
...EVER SINCE WE SET FOOT OFF THE PLANE...
RUMMBLE
20

T'Challa returns to Wakanda until a call to aid both Daredevil and the Avengers' brings him back into the fold with Earth's Mightiest Heroes…

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
20¢
112 JUNE 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM, MORTALS! FOR--
THE LION-GOD LIVES!
ALSO IN THIS ISH: THE END OF AN AVENGER!

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
THE LION GOD LIVES!
BUT OF COURSE, MONSIEUR UMBALA. ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU ASKED TO SEE?
YES... YES! BUT I NEVER EXPECTED--
WAIT TILL I TURN THIS STORY INTO MY EDITOR! IF I HAD KNOWN IT WOULD BE THIS EASY TO FIND AN AFRICAN DEITY, I WOULD HAVE TRIED FOR A PULITZER PRIZE LONG AGO!
WHAT HAS THIS AFRICAN SCENE GOT TO DO WITH THE AVENGERS--? WAIT AND SEE, PILGRIM...
A TRIP INTO HIGH ADVENTURE AND THE FLAT-OUT WEIRD, WITH STEVE ENGLEHART author & DON HECK artist
ALONG WITH FRANK BOLLE, INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, LETTERER / PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST / ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

DID YOU THINK THE GODS OF AFRICA WERE ANY LONGER GONE THAN THE GODS OF ASGARD OR OLYMPUS?
I NEVER GAVE IT MUCH THOUGHT AT ALL, N'LAKA--
PRESS
-- BUT YOU CAN COUNT ME AMONG THE BELIEVERS, NOW!
THAT IS GOOD, MONSIEUR--
-- BECAUSE NOW THAT THE LION GOD HAS RETURNED TO US-- WE NEED A HUMAN SACRIFICE TO APPEASE HIM!
HUMAN SACRIFICE? HA! THAT WENT OUT WITH THE BOER WAR--
WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'S THE JOKE?
HEY, COME ON! THIS IS STUPID!
HEY!
NOOOOooo...
IT IS FINISHED IN AN INSTANT.
AND THEN-- THEN THE LIVING SPIRIT OF THE LION LORD GATHERS HIS OFFERING TO HIM...

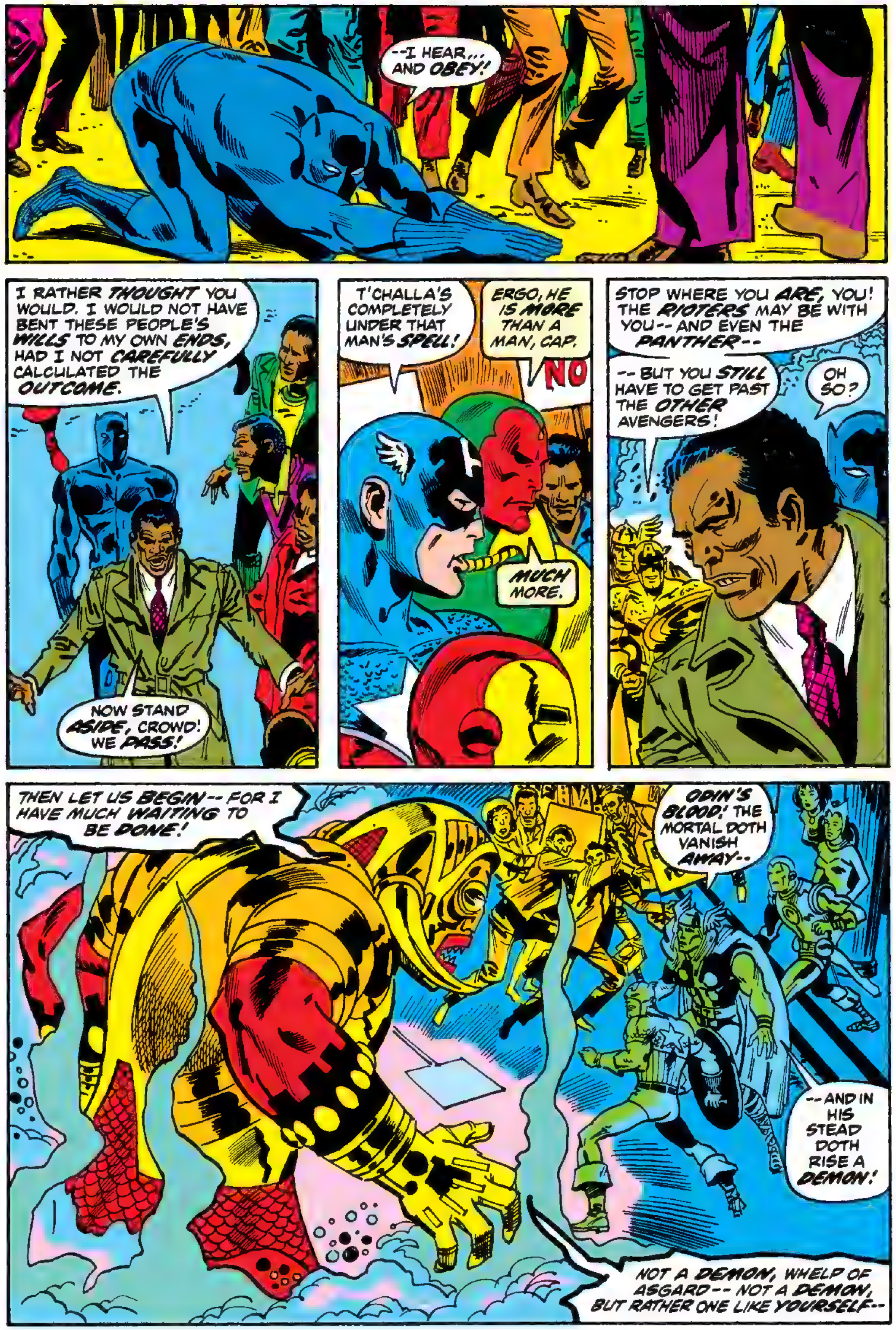


YET ALL THIS TRANSPIRED FOUR DAYS AGO. NOW, LET US SWIFTLY SLIP AHEAD-- TO TODAY.
--A MOONLIGHT STROLL TO THE BAKLAVA STAND, TASH?
NOW, IRON MAN, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TONY STARK'S BODY-GUARD--
--NOT HIS REPOSITORY FOR SNAPPY LINES TO USE ON HOMELESS YOUNG WOMEN!
HOMELESS... BECAUSE I WOULDN'T GO BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO WITH DAREDEVIL...
...BECAUSE HAWKEYE IS THERE ALREADY, AND I CAN'T FACE EITHER OF THEM BEFORE THINKING MY LIFE THROUGH.
THIS IS THE FAMOUS BLACK WIDOW, DARLING OF THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE AND INTER-NATIONAL PLAYGIRL?
OH, SHUSH, IRON MAN! WE DIDN'T MAKE MADAME NATASHA AN AVENGER JUST TO BRIGHTEN UP YOUR EVENINGS.
COME ON, TASHA-- JARVIS HAS YOUR ROOM READY, NOW.
YOU'RE ACTING MUCH MORE GIRLISH THESE DAYS THAN THE SCARLET WITCH I REMEMBER, WANDA.
WELL, I'M MUCH MORE IN LOVE THESE DAYS.
--OR WAS MENTIONING IT A FAUX PAS?
NO, NO. DON'T MIND ME, PLEASE-- IT'S ALL RIGHT.
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WOW! IT SURE BEATS THE YWCA!
MY PLACE ON THE COAST HARDLY LOOKS THIS NICE!

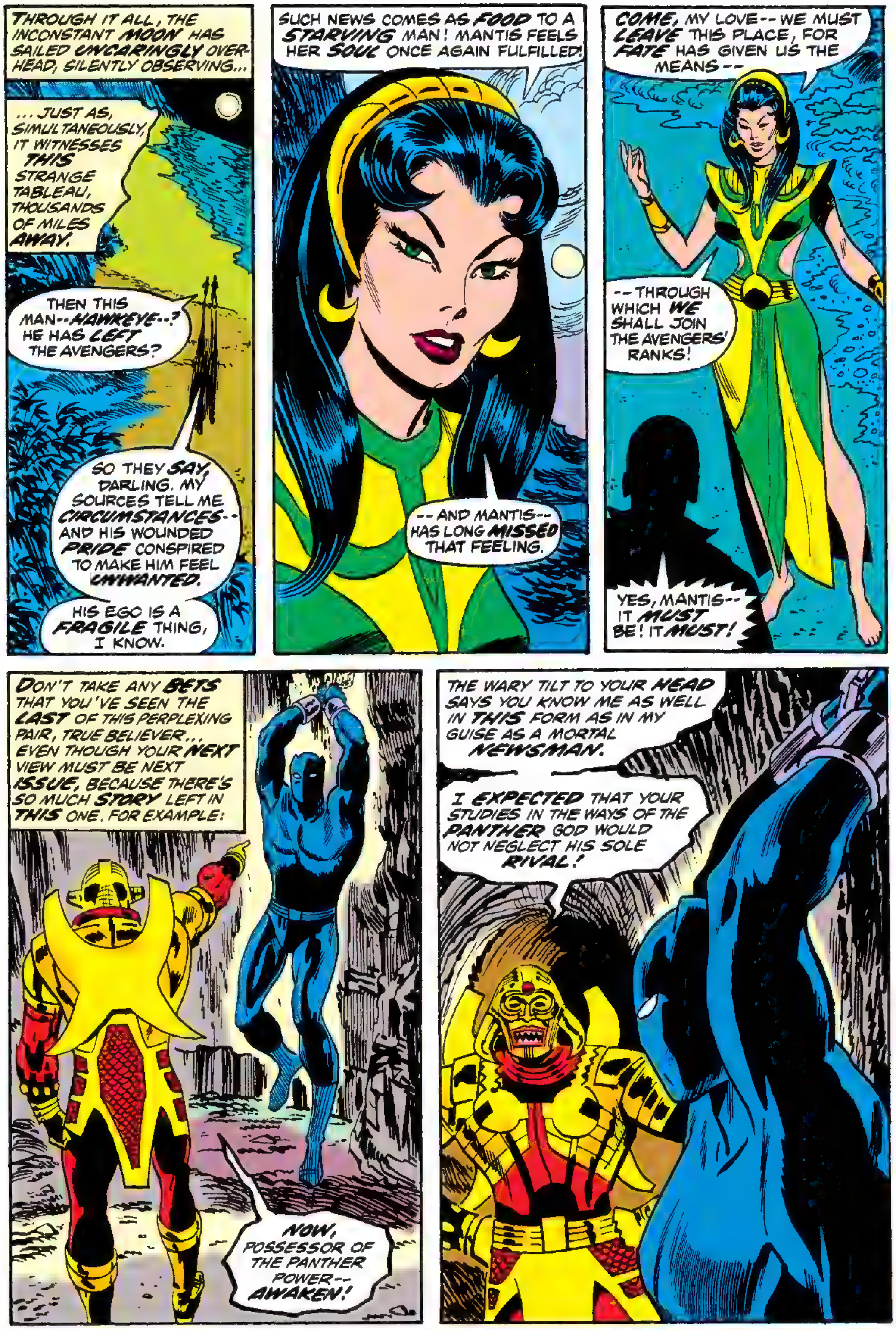
TONY STARK SPARED NO EXPENSE WHEN HE FIRST BUILT THIS TOWN-HOUSE--AND WAS EVEN MORE EXTRAVAGANT WHEN HE REMODELED IT FOR US.
BUT MORE THAN THAT, THE PEOPLE HERE ARE GOOD PEOPLE. YOU'LL LIKE BEING AN AVENGER.
THAT'S TRUE, WIDOW--YOU WILL--
--IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OUTSIDE PRESSURES ON YOU.
BUT THE TELEGRAMS I RECEIVE FROM MY AFRICAN KINGDOM GROW MORE AND MORE INSISTENT UPON MY RETURN...
...AND PERHAPS NOW THAT THE BLACK WIDOW HAS JOINED THIS TEAM, THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL LEAVE.
AND PERHAPS THE EVENTS NOW SETTING THEMSELVES IN MOTION OUTSIDE THESE VERY WALLS SHALL DECIDE THE ISSUE FOR YOU, T'CHALLA.
PAN-THER! PAN-THER!
BLACK PANTHER
WHAT THE HECK IS ALL THAT RACKET, THOR? THE THANKS-GIVING PARADES WERE MONTHS AGO.
COME SEE FOR THYSELF, CAPTAIN AMERICA. IT SEEMETH A DEMONSTRATION.
AGAINST US? WHY?
I CAN HEAR THEM, AVENGER. THEY CALL FOR THE PANTHER.
BREAK THE DOOR DOWN! THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL AVOID HIS PEOPLE NO LONGER!
RIGHT ON, BRO'!
BAM!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, MR. UMBALA!

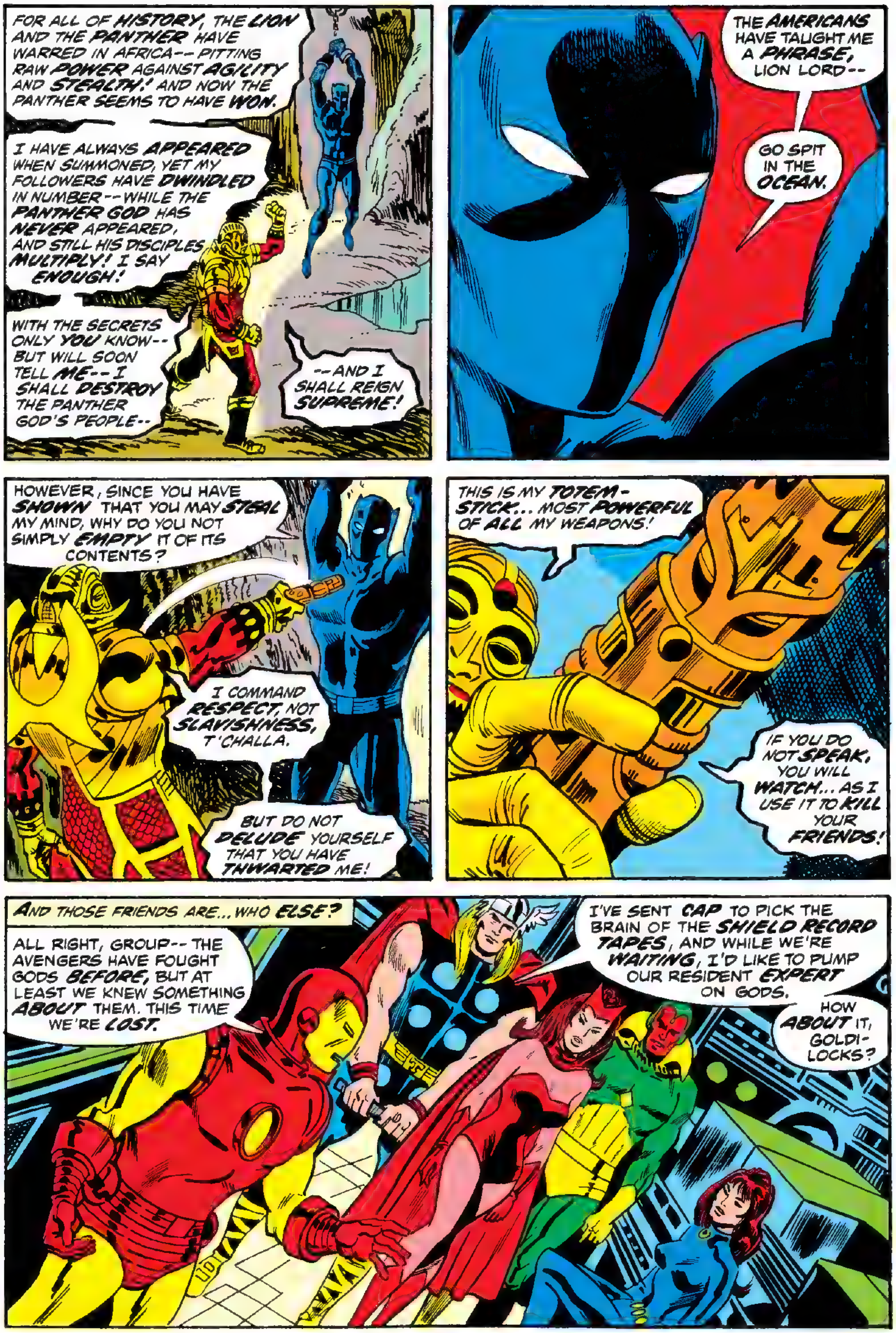
THERE HE IS! LET'S GET 'IM!
HOLD ON NOW! THERE'S NO NEED FOR DESTRUCTION!
I WAS JUST COMING TO TALK WITH YOU!
YEAH? HOW'RE YA GONNA TALK WITH LEAD IN YOUR TEETH, SELL-OUT?
WATCH OUT, T'CHALLA!
BBRRRAP!
UNNHH!
I DON'T LIKE YOUR MANNERS, MISTER!
PAK!
PANTHER GO HOME!
THAT'S TOO FREAKIN' BAD, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
I'LL HAVETA STRAIGHTEN YOUR HEAD OUT-- BY KNOCKIN' IT OFF!
ONLY IF YOU WANT THE SAME TREATMENT, FELLA!
OUTSIDE!
THEY CAN'T DO THIS TO US!
GIVE US THE PANTHER!
NO MORE HANGIN' OUT IN THE U.S. WHEN AFRICA NEEDS HIM! EITHER HE GOES HOME OR HE DIES!

THAT'LL BE ENOUGH TALK ABOUT DYING!
CRUD! THE WITCH'S GOT HER HEX POWER WORKIN'!
DON'T HURT ANY OF THEM, WANDA. I STILL OWE THEM A TALK, AND MAYBE WE CAN WORK OUT WHATEVER'S TROUBLING THEM.
BUT, AS T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA, KING IN HIS OWN RIGHT AND THUS USED TO NEGOTIATING, PADS FORWARD TO REASON WITH HIS ACCUSERS--
--HE FINDS THAT REASON IS NOT ON THEIR MINDS!
AND SO ABANDONS THAT TACTIC!
NOW I WANT ANSWERS-- EITHER THE HARD WAY OR THE EASY! WHAT'S THIS ABOUT MY SELLING OUT?
DO NOT RAIL AGAINST THOSE WHO FOLLOW ME, PRINCE OF THE WAKANDAS!
I AM THE ONE YOU MUST DEAL WITH--I AM THE ONE YOU YOURSELF MUST FOLLOW!
THE BLACK PANTHER FOLLOWS NO ONE, MISTER! I WALK MY LIFE ALONE, AND I DO WHAT--WHAT--

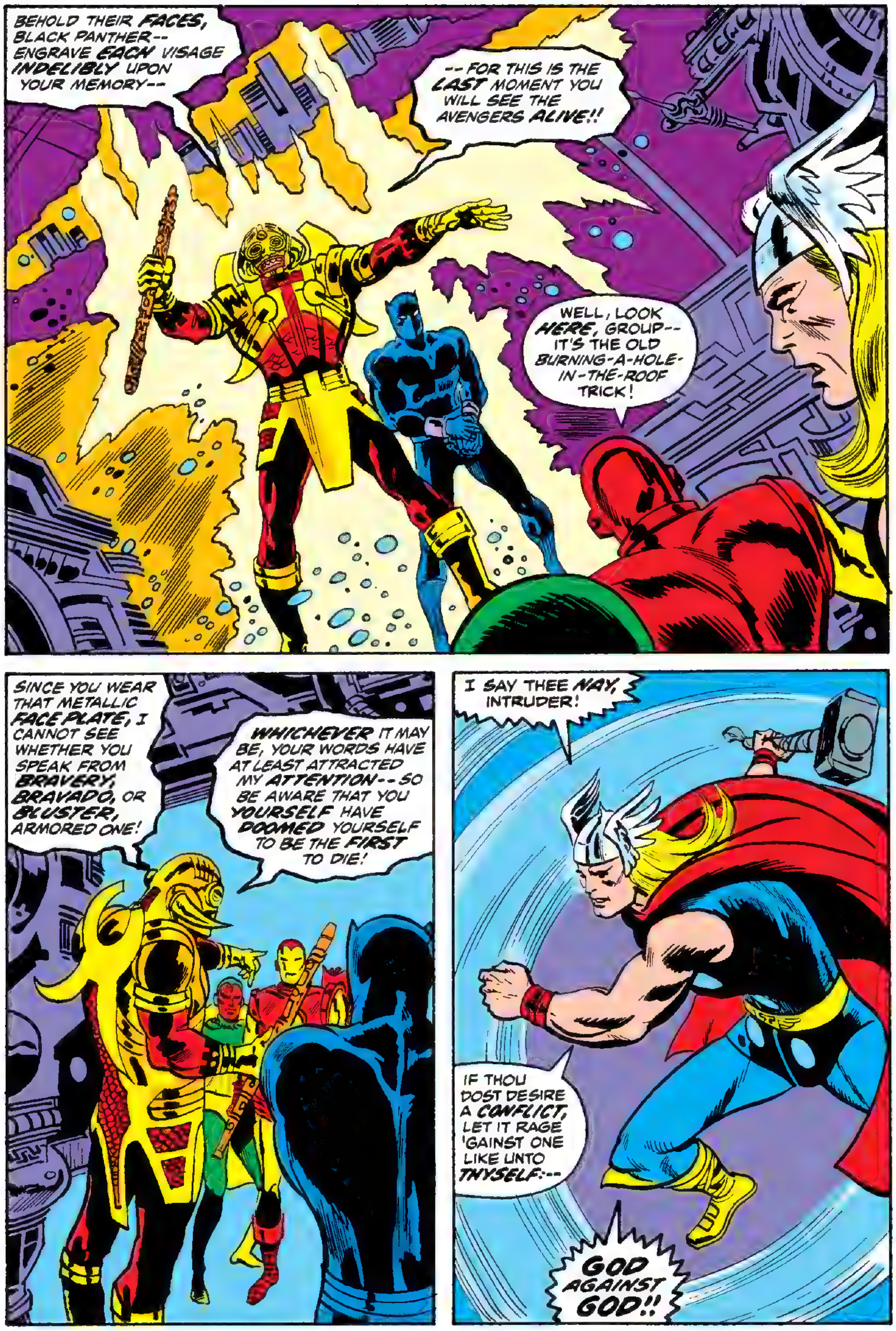

--I HEAR... AND OBEY!
I RATHER THOUGHT YOU WOULD. I WOULD NOT HAVE BENT THESE PEOPLE'S WILLS TO MY OWN ENDS, HAD I NOT CAREFULLY CALCULATED THE OUTCOME.
NOW STAND ASIDE, CROWD! WE PASS!
T'CHALLA'S COMPLETELY UNDER THAT MAN'S SPELL!
ERGO, HE IS MORE THAN A MAN, CAP.
NO
MUCH MORE.
STOP WHERE YOU ARE, YOU! THE RIOTERS MAY BE WITH YOU-- AND EVEN THE PANTHER--
-- BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO GET PAST THE OTHER AVENGERS!
OH SO?
THEN LET US BEGIN-- FOR I HAVE MUCH WAITING TO BE DONE!
ODIN'S BLOOD! THE MORTAL DOTH VANISH AWAY--
--AND IN HIS STEAD DOTH RISE A DEMON!
NOT A DEMON, WHELP OF ASGARD-- NOT A DEMON, BUT RATHER ONE LIKE YOURSELF--

--A GOD!
THE LION GOD, IN TRUTH-- LIEGE TO THE KING OF BEASTS AND ALL WHO WORSHIP HIM--
--LORD OF THE VELDT AND THE VAST, CHURNING JUNGLE--
--A GOD!!
TAKE THEM, YOU WHO FOLLOW!
OUTTA SIGHT, MAN! WITH A GOD ON OUR SIDE, WE'LL CREAM THE PANTHER'S FRIENDS FROM HERE TO HOBOKEN!
DON'T MAKE US FIGHT YOU! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S USING YOU?
I CAN SEE WE'RE LOSIN' YOU, JIM!
YET, ONCE ALL ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIVERTED FROM THE DIABOLICAL DEITY--
HEY! WHAT'S THAT GLOW BEHIND US?
THAT IS YOUR FAST-TALKING PATRON TAKING THE WELL-KNOWN POWDER, GENTS--
--LEAVING YOU IN THE LURCH, AND US UP A CREEK... AS HE UNDOUBTEDLY PLANNED.
BUT IRON MAN'S SARCASTIC DRAWL ALREADY FALLS ON UNCOMPREHENDING EARS, FOR, WITH THE VANISHED GOD FLED--
--SO, TOO, HAS VANISHED THE MOB'S AD HOC ANGER AND CAUSE... LEAVING ONLY BEWILDERMENT WITH THE MANY--
--AND FRUSTRATION IN THE FEW.

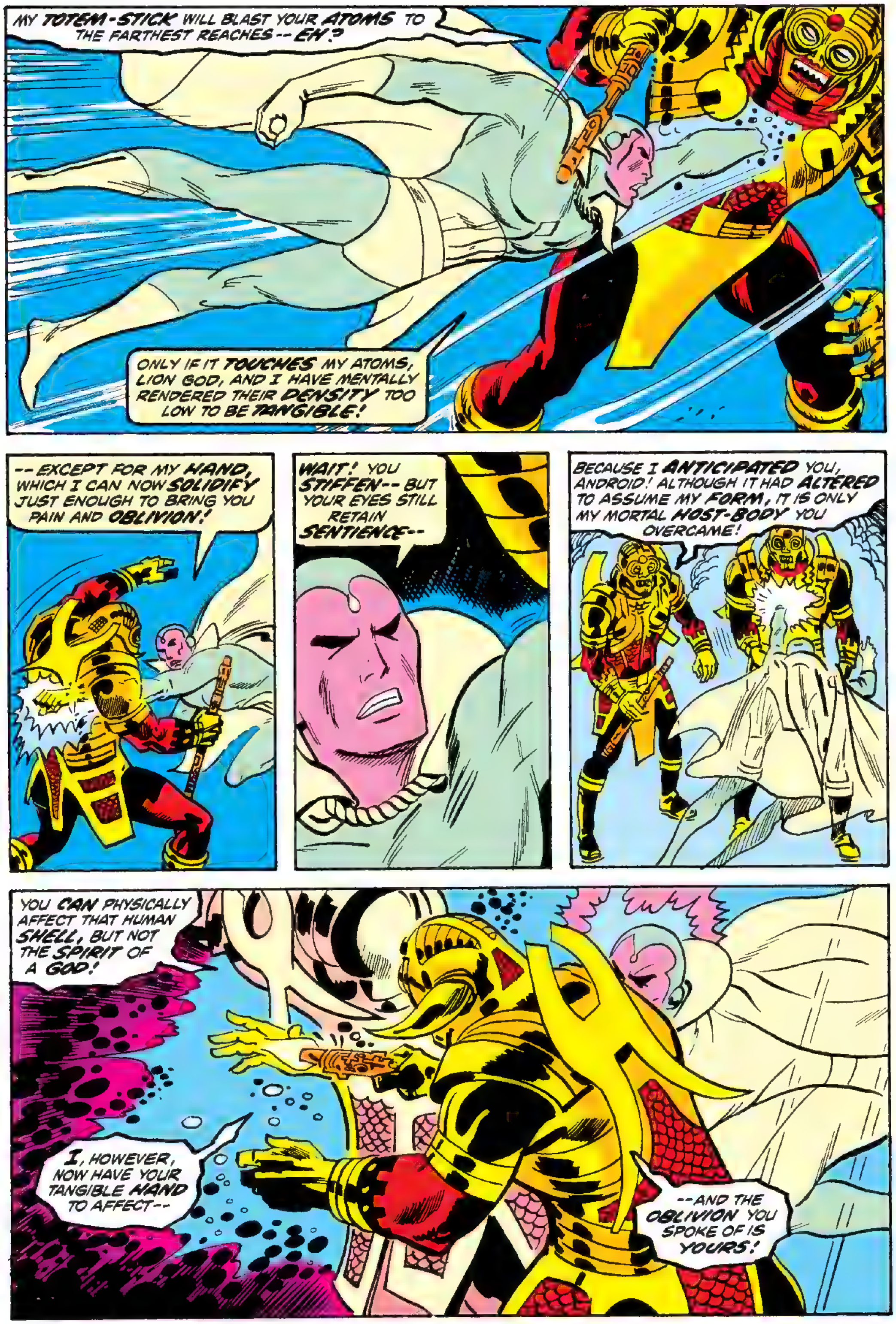

THROUGH IT ALL, THE INCONSTANT MOON HAS SAILED UNCARINGLY OVERHEAD, SILENTLY OBSERVING...
... JUST AS, SIMULTANEOUSLY, IT WITNESSES THIS STRANGE TABLEAU, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY.
THEN THIS MAN--HAWKEYE--? HE HAS LEFT THE AVENGERS?
SO THEY SAY, DARLING. MY SOURCES TELL ME CIRCUMSTANCES--AND HIS WOUNDED PRIDE CONSPIRED TO MAKE HIM FEEL UNWANTED.
HIS EGO IS A FRAGILE THING, I KNOW.
SUCH NEWS COMES AS FOOD TO A STARVING MAN! MANTIS FEELS HER SOUL ONCE AGAIN FULFILLED!
--AND MANTIS--HAS LONG MISSED THAT FEELING.
COME, MY LOVE--WE MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE, FOR FATE HAS GIVEN US THE MEANS--
--THROUGH WHICH WE SHALL JOIN THE AVENGERS' RANKS!
YES, MANTIS--IT MUST BE! IT MUST!
DON'T TAKE ANY BETS THAT YOU'VE SEEN THE LAST OF THIS PERPLEXING PAIR, TRUE BELIEVER... EVEN THOUGH YOUR NEXT VIEW MUST BE NEXT ISSUE, BECAUSE THERE'S SO MUCH STORY LEFT IN THIS ONE. FOR EXAMPLE:
NOW, POSSESSOR OF THE PANTHER POWER--AWAKEN!
THE WARY TILT TO YOUR HEAD SAYS YOU KNOW ME AS WELL IN THIS FORM AS IN MY GUISE AS A MORTAL NEWSMAN.
I EXPECTED THAT YOUR STUDIES IN THE WAYS OF THE PANTHER GOD WOULD NOT NEGLECT HIS SOLE RIVAL!


FOR ALL OF HISTORY, THE LION AND THE PANTHER HAVE WARRED IN AFRICA-- PITTING RAW POWER AGAINST AGILITY AND STEALTH! AND NOW THE PANTHER SEEMS TO HAVE WON.
I HAVE ALWAYS APPEARED WHEN SUMMONED, YET MY FOLLOWERS HAVE DWINDLED IN NUMBER -- WHILE THE PANTHER GOD HAS NEVER APPEARED, AND STILL HIS DISCIPLES MULTIPLY! I SAY ENOUGH!
WITH THE SECRETS ONLY YOU KNOW-- BUT WILL SOON TELL ME-- I SHALL DESTROY THE PANTHER GOD'S PEOPLE--
--AND I SHALL REIGN SUPREME!
THE AMERICANS HAVE TAUGHT ME A PHRASE, LION LORD--
GO SPIT IN THE OCEAN.
HOWEVER, SINCE YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT YOU MAY STEAL MY MIND, WHY DO YOU NOT SIMPLY EMPTY IT OF ITS CONTENTS?
I COMMAND RESPECT, NOT SLAVISHNESS, T'CHALLA.
BUT DO NOT DELUDE YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE THWARTED ME!
THIS IS MY TOTEM-STICK... MOST POWERFUL OF ALL MY WEAPONS!
IF YOU DO NOT SPEAK, YOU WILL WATCH... AS I USE IT TO KILL YOUR FRIENDS!
AND THOSE FRIENDS ARE... WHO ELSE?
ALL RIGHT, GROUP-- THE AVENGERS HAVE FOUGHT GODS BEFORE, BUT AT LEAST WE KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. THIS TIME WE'RE LOST.
I'VE SENT CAP TO PICK THE BRAIN OF THE SHIELD RECORD TAPES, AND WHILE WE'RE WAITING, I'D LIKE TO PUMP OUR RESIDENT EXPERT ON GODS.
HOW ABOUT IT, GOLDI-LOCKS?

UNFORTUNATELY, IRON MAN, 'TIS NOT SO SIMPLE. THE SINGLE WORD "GOD" HATH MANY AND VARIED CONNOTATIONS.
WE ASGARDIANS BEAR THAT NAME... AND SO, TOO, THE WRITHING HORRORS WHICH CRAWL ACROSS OTHER DIMENSIONS IN MINDLESS DARKNESS.
E'EN LIMITING MYSELF TO THIS SPHERE, I REMAIN UNABLE TO GIVE YE MUCH AID.
ASGARD'S CONCERNS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE NORTHLANDS. WE LEARNED SOON ENOW OF FABLED OLYMPUS TO THE SOUTH...
...YET BEYOND THAT, WE TRADITIONALLY CARED SO LITTLE FOR MIDGARD* THAT FURTHER EXPLORATION WAS RARELY ATTEMPTED.
*EARTH. --ROY.
IF THIS LION LORD BE INDEED A GOD, HE AND I YET HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON. HE MAY BE--
IN OTHER WORDS, ALL WE HAVE IS WORDS--AND NO PROGRESS.
WE'RE LISTENING, NATASHA.
WELL...I REALIZE I'M ONLY THE JUNIOR MEMBER OF THIS TEAM...
...BUT IT SEEMS TO ME WE SHOULD BE OUT SCOURING THE CITY, OR THE WORLD, OR WHATEVER YOU DO.
DAREDEVIL AND I HAVE FOUND THAT ACTION BREEDS REACTION FROM OUR ENEMIES.
WE KNOW NOT THAT THE LION GOD HATH ANY BURNING DESIRE TO CROSS US A SECOND TIME.
AND WE HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE TO HIS WHEREABOUTS, LADY. TAKE MY WORD FOR IT: SCOURING THE EARTH IS A DRAG.
I STILL DON'T LIKE PLAYING A WAITING GAME.
I AGREE.
WHAT IS THIS: GIRLS AGAINST BOYS? I SAY WE'LL WAIT FOR CAP--
KRAZZ!
IRON MAN! THE CEILING--!


BEHOLD THEIR FACES, BLACK PANTHER-- ENGRAVE EACH VISAGE INDELIBLY UPON YOUR MEMORY--
--FOR THIS IS THE LAST MOMENT YOU WILL SEE THE AVENGERS ALIVE!!
WELL, LOOK HERE, GROUP-- IT'S THE OLD BURNING-A-HOLE-IN-THE-ROOF TRICK!
SINCE YOU WEAR THAT METALLIC FACE PLATE, I CANNOT SEE WHETHER YOU SPEAK FROM BRAVERY, BRAVADO, OR BLUSTER, ARMORED ONE!
WHICHEVER IT MAY BE, YOUR WORDS HAVE AT LEAST ATTRACTED MY ATTENTION-- SO BE AWARE THAT YOU YOURSELF HAVE DOOMED YOURSELF TO BE THE FIRST TO DIE!
I SAY THEE NAY, INTRUDER!
IF THOU DOST DESIRE A CONFLICT, LET IT RAGE 'GAINST ONE LIKE UNTO THYSELF:--
GOD AGAINST GOD!!

MYSTIC MJOLNIR SHALL BRING THE DEFEAT THOU DOST DESERVE!
NO, THOR! NOT WHILE I POSSESS ALL THE SPEED OF A LION COMBINED WITH THE SKILL OF A DEITY!
AND BEFORE YOUR HAMMER CAN RETURN TO YOU, ASGARDIAN, I CALL UPON MY SACRED WEAPON--
--TO PROVE THAT THE MIGHT OF ONE GOD MAY EASILY FELL ANOTHER!
THOR'S DOWN, BUT THE ONLY IMPORTANT BATTLE IS THE FINAL ONE!
ARE YOU MAD? HOW CAN YOU DARE TO ATTACK ME AFTER WITNESSING MY AWESOME POWER?

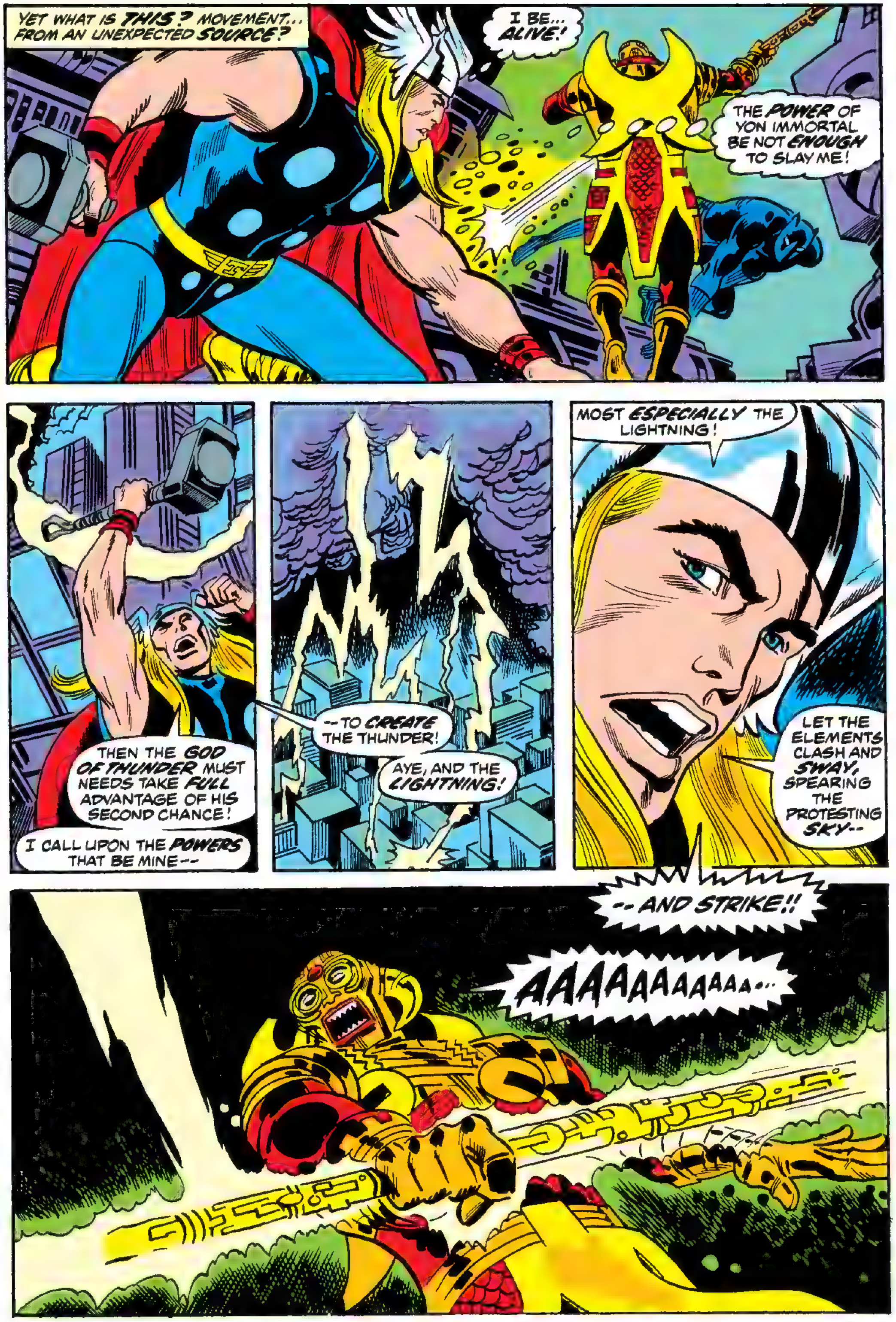

MY TOTEM-STICK WILL BLAST YOUR ATOMS TO THE FARTHEST REACHES -- EH?
ONLY IF IT TOUCHES MY ATOMS, LION GOD, AND I HAVE MENTALLY RENDERED THEIR DENSITY TOO LOW TO BE TANGIBLE!
-- EXCEPT FOR MY HAND, WHICH I CAN NOW SOLIDIFY JUST ENOUGH TO BRING YOU PAIN AND OBLIVION!
WAIT! YOU STIFFEN -- BUT YOUR EYES STILL RETAIN SENTIENCE --
BECAUSE I ANTICIPATED YOU, ANDROID! ALTHOUGH IT HAD ALTERED TO ASSUME MY FORM, IT IS ONLY MY MORTAL HOST-BODY YOU OVERCAME!
YOU CAN PHYSICALLY AFFECT THAT HUMAN SHELL, BUT NOT THE SPIRIT OF A GOD!
I, HOWEVER, NOW HAVE YOUR TANGIBLE HAND TO AFFECT --
-- AND THE OBLIVION YOU SPOKE OF IS YOURS!

AND NEXT, A WOMAN LEAPS TO BATTLE-- BUT SUCH A CONTEST IS NOT THE WAY OF THE LION LORD!
THUNK!
IN PREFERENCE, I LET MY SAVAGE JUNGLE BEASTS ENGAGE THE FEMALE, WHILE I FACE WARRIORS!
I'M GLAD I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR TRIBES-PEOPLE, FRIEND!
SERVING A MALE CHAUVINIST GOD WOULD GET ME DOWN IN A HURRY!
RRRRARR
AT ANY RATE, YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S THE LADY LION THAT'S THE MOST DANGEROUS--
RROARRRR
--AND IF I CAN CLING TO THIS WALL LONG ENOUGH--
I'LL USE MY WIDOW'S LINE TO PULL HER HIGHNESS INTO HER MATE AND PROVE IT TO YOU!
RRARG!
RRRRRRR
LIKE I THOUGHT: THEY'LL DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM A SEEMING ATTACK BEFORE CHASING PREY!
BEAUTIFULLY DONE, BEAUTIFUL!
WANDA, TRY TO REVIVE THOR AND THE VISION! WE MAY NEED THEM!
BUT DON'T FORGET WE NEED YOU TOO!
I'M NOT A CHILD, IRON MAN!

BEING IN LOVE WON'T MAKE ME OVERLOOK MY RESPONSIBIL-ITIES--
--OR MY MUTANT ABILITY!
FWAM!
THAT DRAINED ME, BUT I'VE DONE ALL I CAN!
BUT THE VISION-- HE'S SO STILL--!
AH, WANDA... IF ONLY YOU HAD BEEN MORE CONCERNED WITH THE FIGHT THAN YOUR MAN --FOR THEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED BACK TO HIM SO QUICKLY...
ANOTHER LION-- CROUCHING FOR THE ATTACK! WANDA'S IN DANGER--
--BUT NOW IS THE MOMENT FOR THE BLACK PANTHER TO MAKE HIS MOVE!
THE LION LORD SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT A CAPTIVE AVENGER TO AVENGER'S MANSION--
--WHERE WE HAVE OUR MACHINES!
ZOT!
NOW, WHETHER WE STAND OR FALL-- I SHALL HAVE BEEN A PART OF THE AVENGERS' DEFENSE!
RRRAAR
OH MY LORD--!

T'CHALLA!
HO, KING OF THE JUNGLE-- TRY YOUR CLAWS AGAINST ANOTHER JUNGLE-BORN!
YOUR PATRON SPIRIT SAID THAT PANTHERS FOUGHT ONLY WITH CUNNING, UNABLE TO MATCH YOUR STRENGTH--
RRAGH!
--BUT THE TRUTH IS NOT SO SIMPLISTIC!
RRRRRR
I AM ONLY A MAN, BUT I KNOW THE SECRETS OF THE PANTHER GOD--
--AND THOUGH FEW MEN MAY TRIUMPH OVER A FULL-GROWN LION IN A CONTEST OF NAKED STRENGTH--
--THE BLACK PANTHER HAS TRIUMPHED OVER YOU!
AND MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM...
THAT WAS MARVELOUS, IRON MAN! IF YOU HADN'T FINISHED THOSE BEASTS OFF, I'D HAVE HAD TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE ON THIS WALL!
KEEP GOING--I LOVE EGO-BOO...
...BUT WE HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED THE BIG CHEESE AS YET.

IRON MAN!
PUNY, PALE MORTALS! I HAVE DELAYED LONG ENOUGH, AND IT HAS COST ME!
FOOM!
IN PLACE OF BREAKING T'CHALLA, I HAVE PROVIDED A MEANS FOR THE REAFFIRMATION OF HIS SELF-ESTEEM!
THIS GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED!
I WILL SACRIFICE YOU ALL!
I WILL LEVEL THIS MANSION AND ALL WITHIN IT! I WILL LEVEL THE WORLD!
HE'S RAGING WITH A FURY ONLY A GOD COULD FEEL!
NO HUMAN I'VE EVER MET SEEMED MORE INTENSELY BERSERK THAN THE LION LORD!
I CAN'T STOP HIM-- EVEN THOUGH I THINK HE'S KILLED ALL THE OTHERS!
I CAN'T STOP HIM!!


YET WHAT IS THIS? MOVEMENT... FROM AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE?
I BE... ALIVE!
THE POWER OF YON IMMORTAL BE NOT ENOUGH TO SLAY ME!
THEN THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST NEEDS TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF HIS SECOND CHANCE!
I CALL UPON THE POWERS THAT BE MINE--
--TO CREATE THE THUNDER!
AYE, AND THE LIGHTNING!
MOST ESPECIALLY THE LIGHTNING!
LET THE ELEMENTS CLASH AND SWAY, SPEARING THE PROTESTING SKY--
--AND STRIKE!!
AAAAAAAAAAA...

THIS ELEMENTAL POWER OF NATURE, COURSING BLINDLY THROUGH HIS TOTEM-STICK-- AND SO THROUGH HIS FORM...
...IT HATH DESTROYED THE LION LORD, AS HE DID STRIVE TO DESTROY US!
BEHIND THEM, THEN, RISES A GROAN...AND FROM ANOTHER CORNER, A SIGH...AS FIRST ONE AVENGER AND THEN ANOTHER AND ANOTHER RETURNS TO CONSCIOUSNESS FROM WHATEVER DARK LAND THE AFRICAN DEITY HAD DISPATCHED THEM.
AND SOON...
THOR, HOW DID YOU KNOW BLASTING THE GOD WOULD UNDO HIS MAGIC?
IN TRUTH, T'CHALLA, I KNEW NO SUCH THING.
I ACTED TO PRESERVE THY AND MY LIVES, IN THE SOLE MANNER LEFT TO ME.
I COULD BUT HOPE IT WOULD AID THE OTHERS.
THAT WAS A GREAT OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE YOU PUT ON, WIDOW! YOU'RE GOING TO FIT IN REAL WELL AROUND HERE!
IRON MAN-- ALL OF YOU-- LISTEN...
I'VE ENJOYED THIS-- I REALLY HAVE-- BUT BEING WITH YOU HAS TAUGHT ME A FEW THINGS.
FIRST, I THINK I'M TOO MUCH MY OWN WOMAN TO FEEL ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WORKING WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE. I'M MORE A DO-IT-YOURSELF TYPE.
--AND SECOND: ONCE YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR HEART LIES, YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW IT.
SEEING WANDA RUN TO THE VISION SETTLED MY DOUBTS.
IF YOU TRULY NEED ME, I'LL STAY... BUT I'D RATHER GO BACK TO WORKING WITH ONE MAN--A MAN I CAN UNDERSTAND--
--DAREDEVIL!
GO, TASHA-- WITH OUR BLESSINGS.
WE ONLY RECRUITED YOU AND HIM TO HELP US AGAINST MAGNETO... AND THAT NEED NO LONGER EXISTS.
BESIDES, I HAVE SETTLED MY DOUBTS TODAY AS WELL. EVIL MAY ORIGINATE ANYWHERE --AND STRIKE ANYWHERE.
I CANNOT LIMIT MYSELF SOLELY TO MY AFRICAN KINGDOM. IF I AM TO FIGHT EVIL, I MUST BE ABLE TO FIGHT IT ON ANY PART OF THE GLOBE!
THAT IS WHY-- THE BLACK PANTHER WILL REMAIN AN AVENGER!
AS YOU DESIRE IT, T'CHALLA.
A GOD CANNOT DIE BY FORCE--AND SOON, WHEN I HAVE RECOVERED MY POWER, I SHALL RETURN FOR YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE.
HIGH ABOVE, INVISIBLE IN HIS SUPERNATURAL MAJESTY--
THE LION GOD LAUGHS!
NEXT: YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SLAY VISIONS!

MARVEL TEAM-UP
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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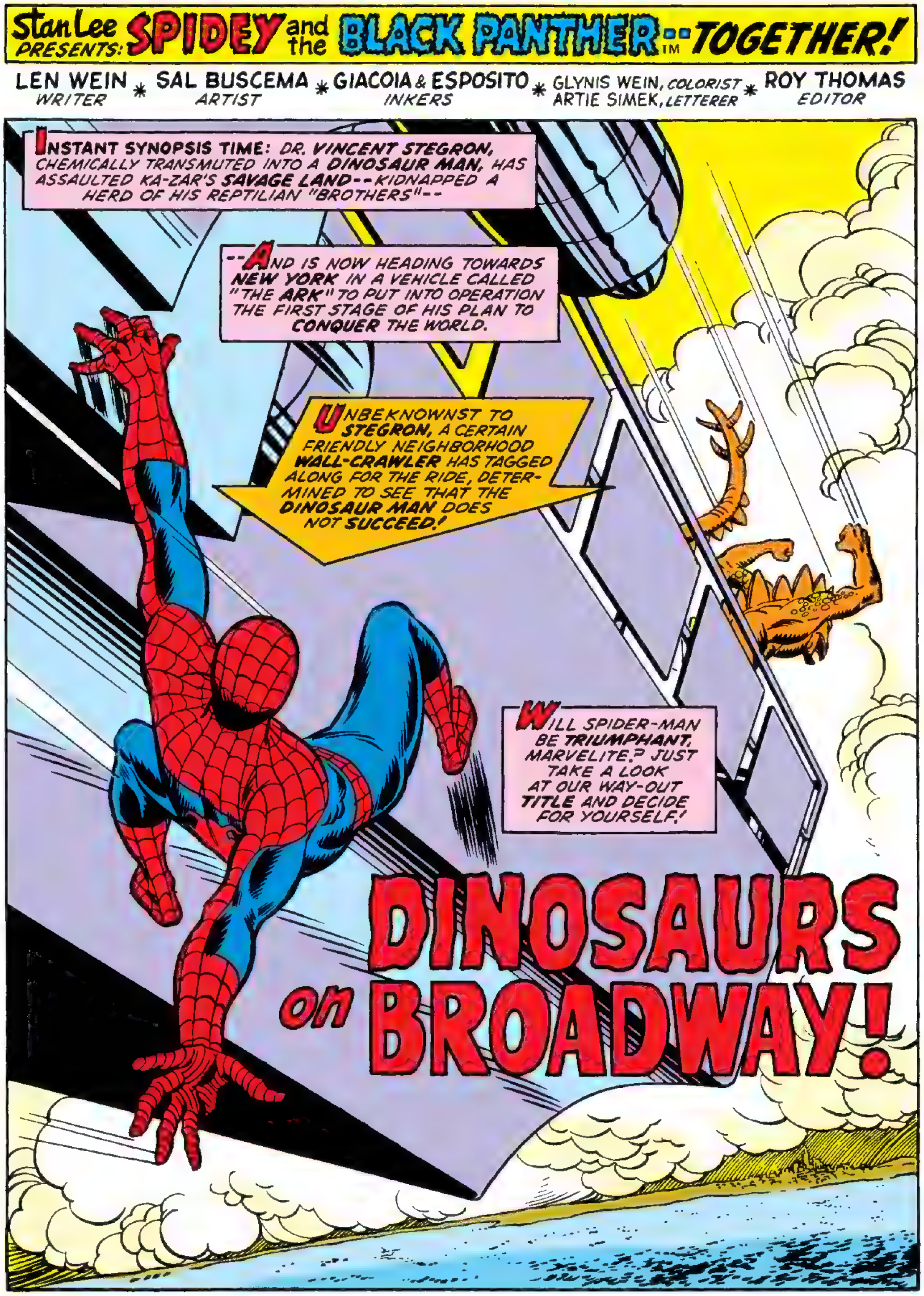
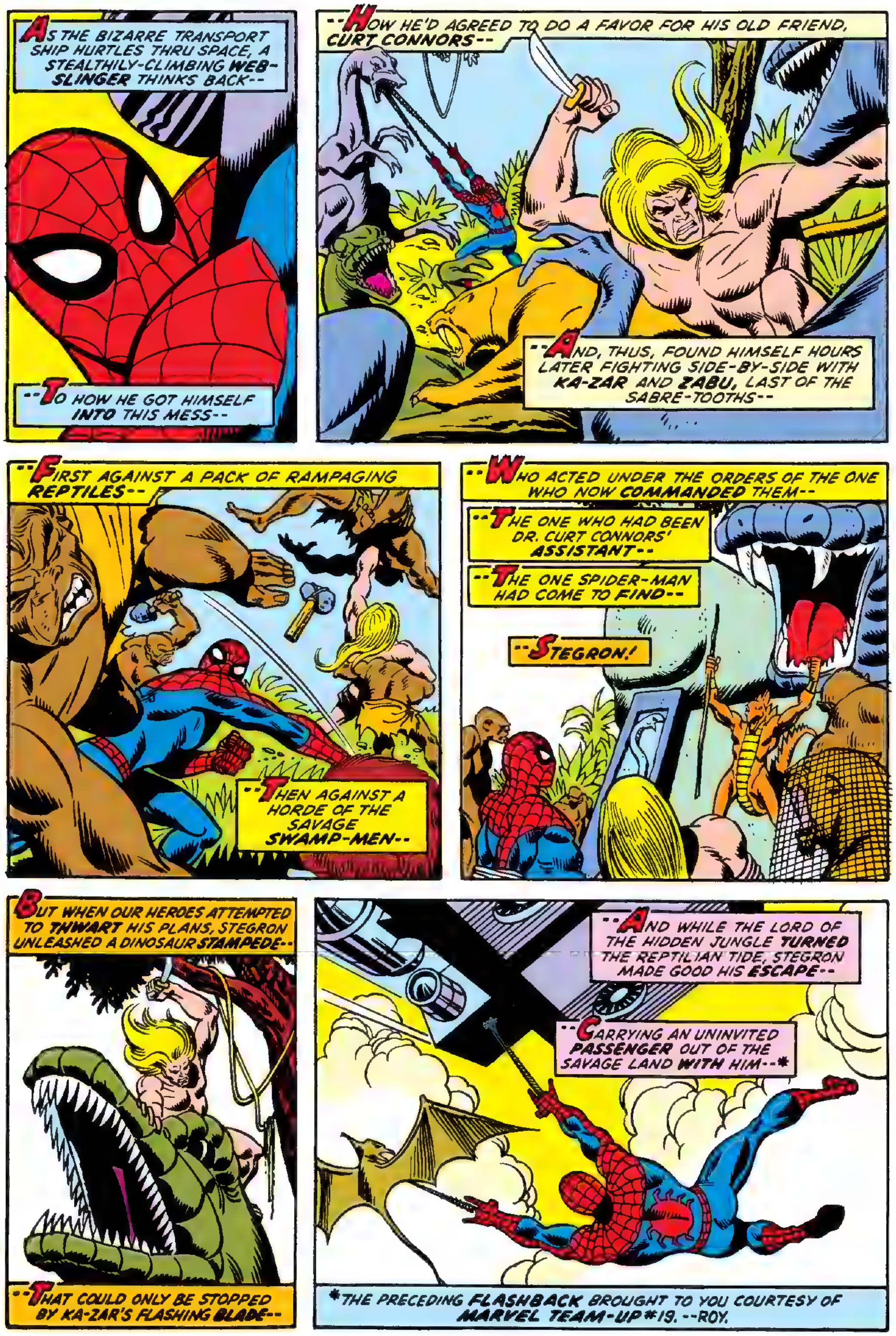
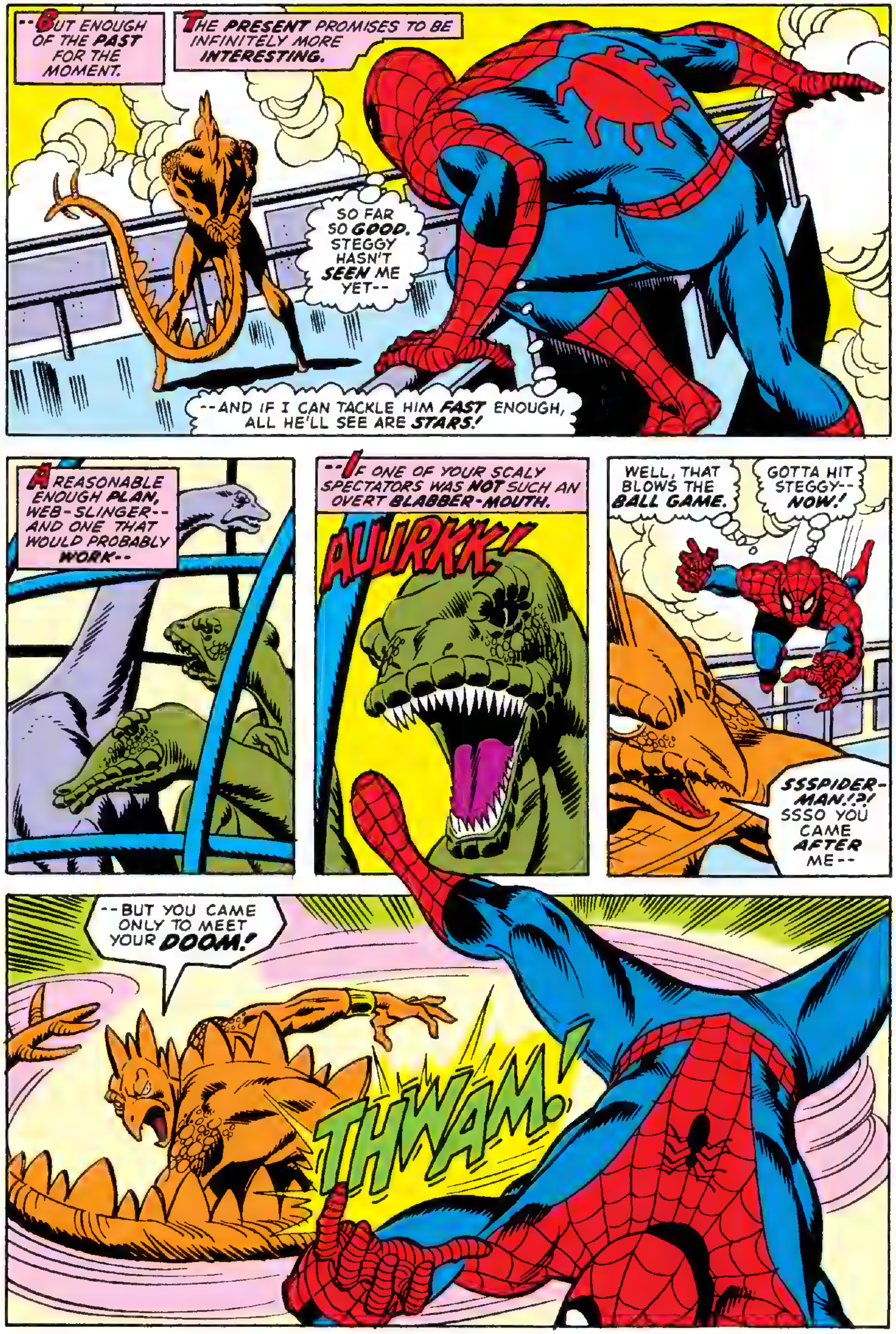
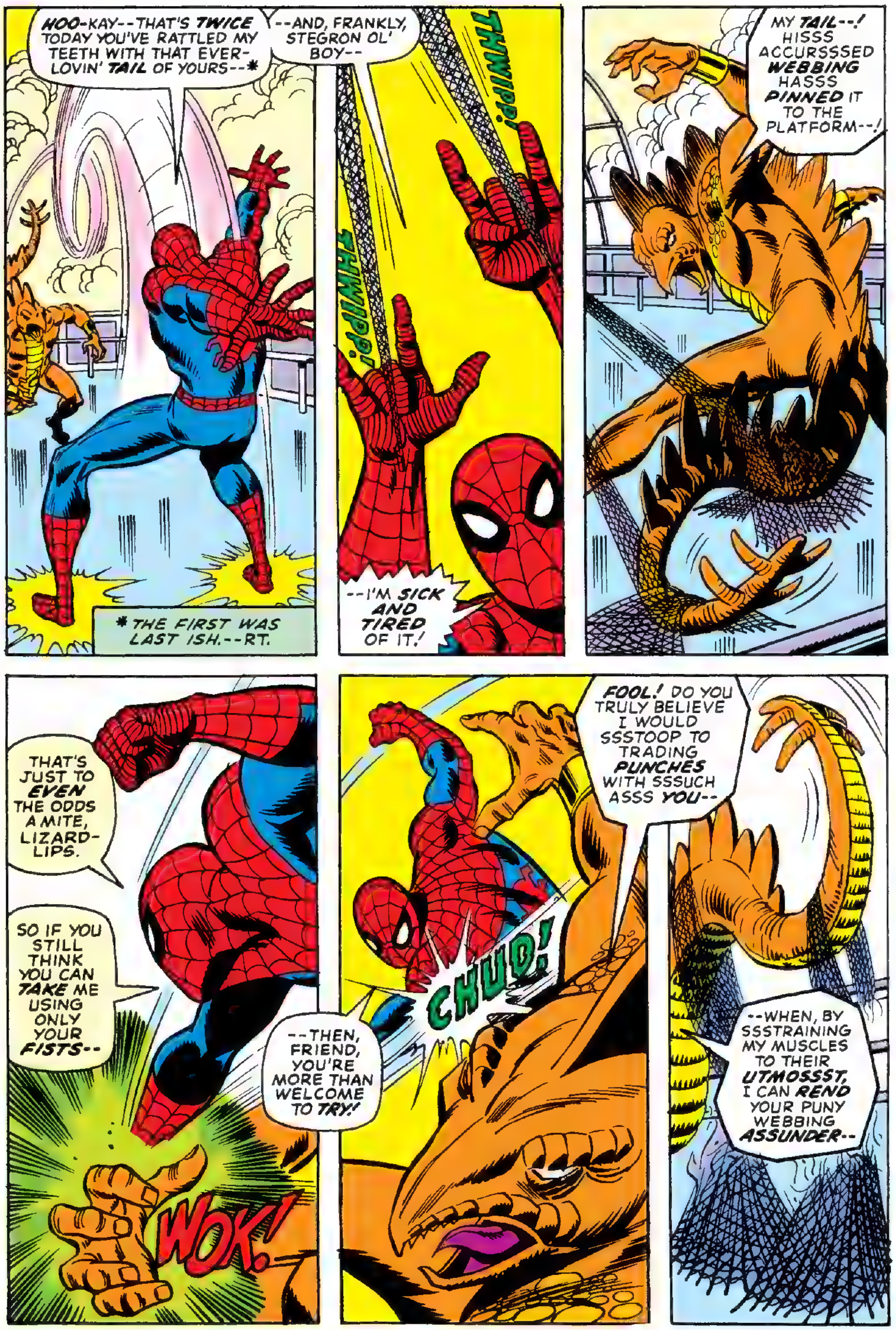
MARVEL TEAM-UP
FEATURING:
SPIDER-MAN AND THE BLACK PANTHER
STILL AT LARGE-- AND OUT FOR BLOOD! STEGRON! THE DINOSAUR MAN!
MONSTERS--MAYHEM--and MILE-HIGH MURDER!

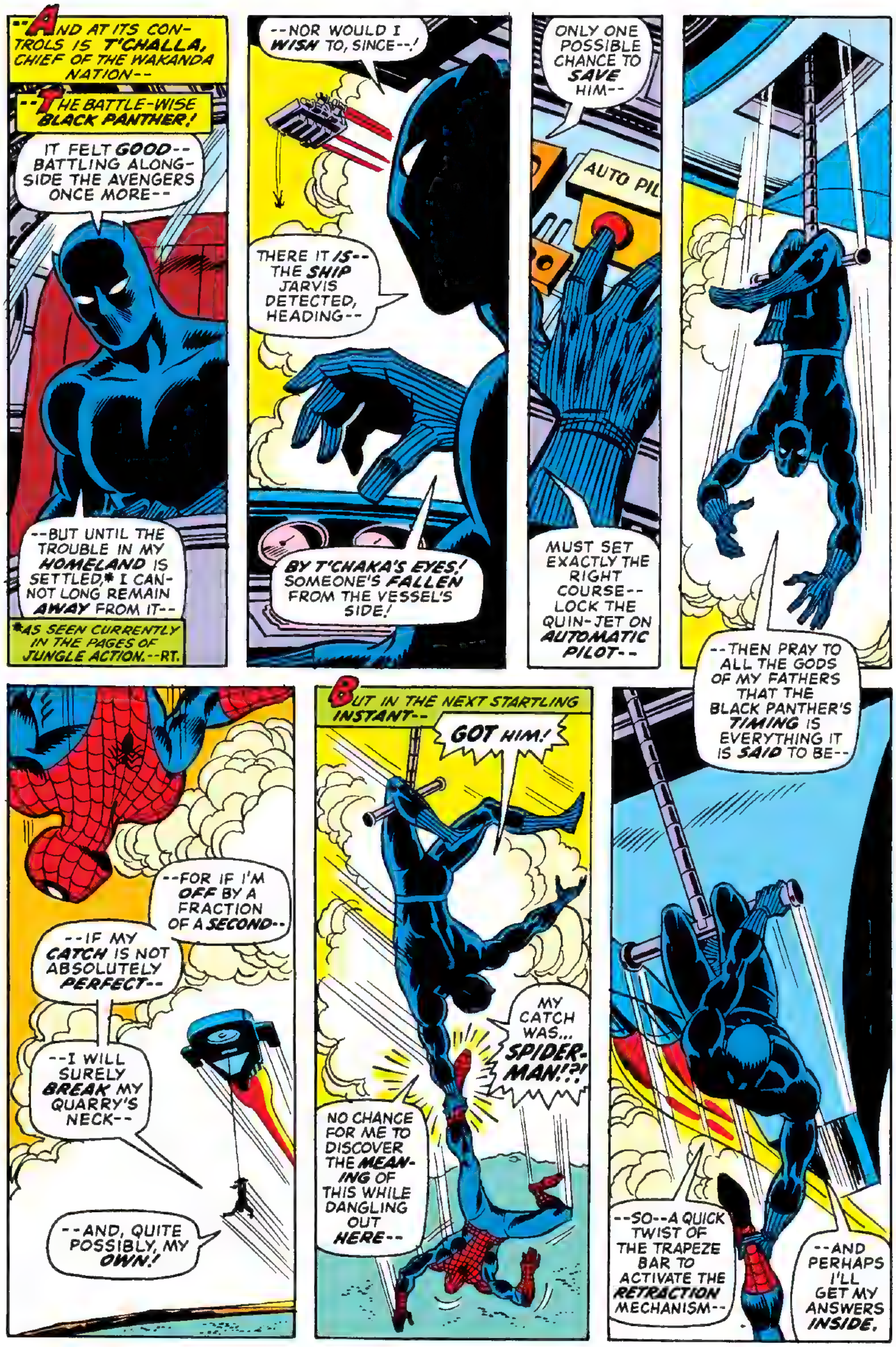

Stan Lee PRESENTS: SPIDEY and the BLACK PANTHER -- TOGETHER!
LEN WEIN WRITER * SAL BUSCEMA ARTIST * GIACOIA & ESPOSITO INKERS * GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER * ROY THOMAS EDITOR
INSTANT SYNOPSIS TIME: DR. VINCENT STEGRON, CHEMICALLY TRANSMUTED INTO A DINOSAUR MAN, HAS ASSAULTED KA-ZAR'S SAVAGE LAND--KIDNAPPED A HERD OF HIS REPTILIAN "BROTHERS"--
--AND IS NOW HEADING TOWARDS NEW YORK IN A VEHICLE CALLED "THE ARK" TO PUT INTO OPERATION THE FIRST STAGE OF HIS PLAN TO CONQUER THE WORLD.
UNBEKNOWNST TO STEGRON, A CERTAIN FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD WALL-CRAWLER HAS TAGGED ALONG FOR THE RIDE, DETERMINED TO SEE THAT THE DINOSAUR MAN DOES NOT SUCCEED!
WILL SPIDER-MAN BE TRIUMPHANT, MARVELITE? JUST TAKE A LOOK AT OUR WAY-OUT TITLE AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF!
DINOSAURS on BROADWAY!

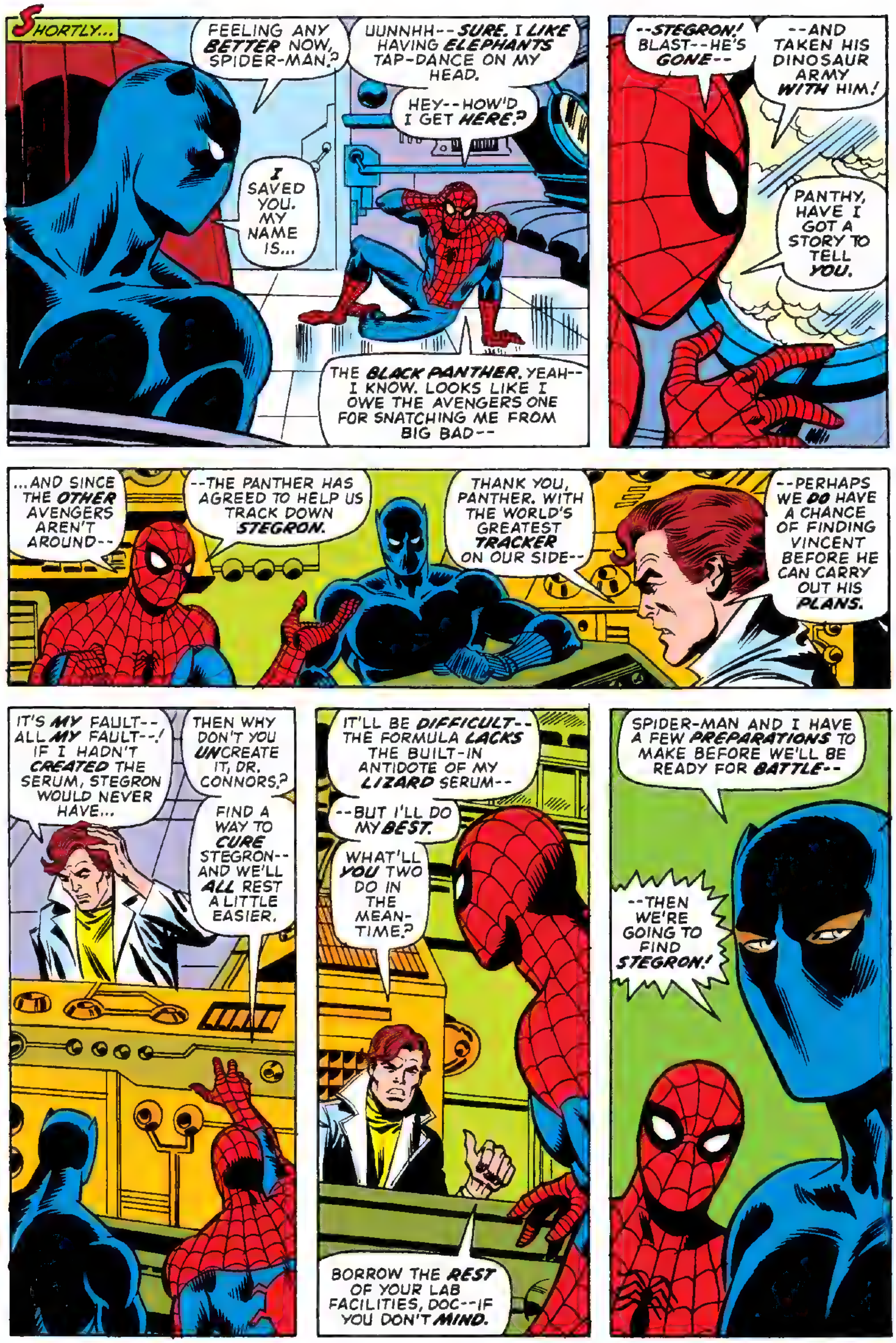

AS THE BIZARRE TRANSPORT SHIP HURTLES THRU SPACE, A STEALTHILY-CLIMBING WEB-SLINGER THINKS BACK--
--TO HOW HE GOT HIMSELF INTO THIS MESS--
--HOW HE'D AGREED TO DO A FAVOR FOR HIS OLD FRIEND, CURT CONNORS--
--AND, THUS, FOUND HIMSELF HOURS LATER FIGHTING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH KA-ZAR AND ZABU, LAST OF THE SABRE-TOOTHS--
--FIRST AGAINST A PACK OF RAMPAGING REPTILES--
--THEN AGAINST A HORDE OF THE SAVAGE SWAMP-MEN--
--WHO ACTED UNDER THE ORDERS OF THE ONE WHO NOW COMMANDED THEM--
--THE ONE WHO HAD BEEN DR. CURT CONNORS' ASSISTANT--
--THE ONE SPIDER-MAN HAD COME TO FIND--
--STEGRON!
BUT WHEN OUR HEROES ATTEMPTED TO THWART HIS PLANS, STEGRON UNLEASHED A DINOSAUR STAMPEDE--
--THAT COULD ONLY BE STOPPED BY KA-ZAR'S FLASHING BLADE--
--AND WHILE THE LORD OF THE HIDDEN JUNGLE TURNED THE REPTILIAN TIDE, STEGRON MADE GOOD HIS ESCAPE--
--CARRYING AN UNINVITED PASSENGER OUT OF THE SAVAGE LAND WITH HIM--*
*THE PRECEDING FLASHBACK BROUGHT TO YOU COURTESY OF MARVEL TEAM-UP #19. --ROY.

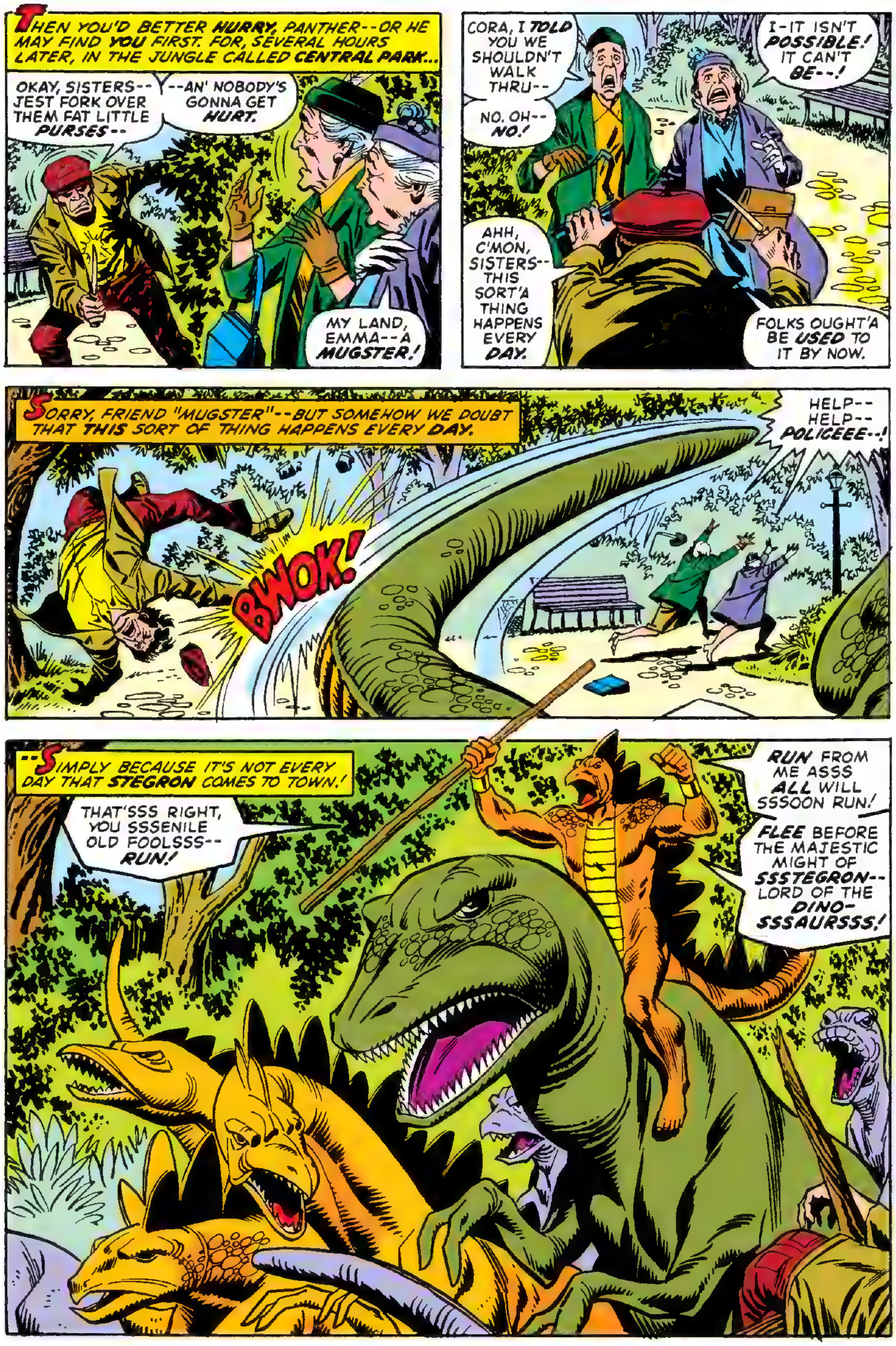

--BUT ENOUGH OF THE PAST FOR THE MOMENT.
THE PRESENT PROMISES TO BE INFINITELY MORE INTERESTING.
SO FAR SO GOOD. STEGGY HASN'T SEEN ME YET--
--AND IF I CAN TACKLE HIM FAST ENOUGH, ALL HE'LL SEE ARE STARS!
A REASONABLE ENOUGH PLAN, WEB-SLINGER--AND ONE THAT WOULD PROBABLY WORK--
--IF ONE OF YOUR SCALY SPECTATORS WAS NOT SUCH AN OVERT BLABBER-MOUTH.
AUURKK!
WELL, THAT BLOWS THE BALL GAME.
GOTTA HIT STEGGY--NOW!
SSSPIDER-MAN!?! SSSO YOU CAME AFTER ME--
--BUT YOU CAME ONLY TO MEET YOUR DOOM!
THWAM!


HOO-KAY--THAT'S TWICE TODAY YOU'VE RATTLED MY TEETH WITH THAT EVER-LOVIN' TAIL OF YOURS--*
*THE FIRST WAS LAST ISH.--RT.
--AND, FRANKLY, STEGRON OL' BOY--
THWIPP!
THWIPP!
--I'M SICK AND TIRED OF IT.!
MY TAIL--! HISSS ACCURSSSED WEBBING HASSS PINNED IT TO THE PLATFORM--!
THAT'S JUST TO EVEN THE ODDS A MITE, LIZARD-LIPS.
SO IF YOU STILL THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME USING ONLY YOUR FISTS--
WOK!
--THEN, FRIEND, YOU'RE MORE THAN WELCOME TO TRY!
CHUD!
FOOL! DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE I WOULD SSSTOOP TO TRADING PUNCHES WITH SSSUCH ASSS YOU--
--WHEN, BY SSSTRAINING MY MUSCLES TO THEIR UTMOSSST, I CAN REND YOUR PUNY WEBBING ASSUNDER--

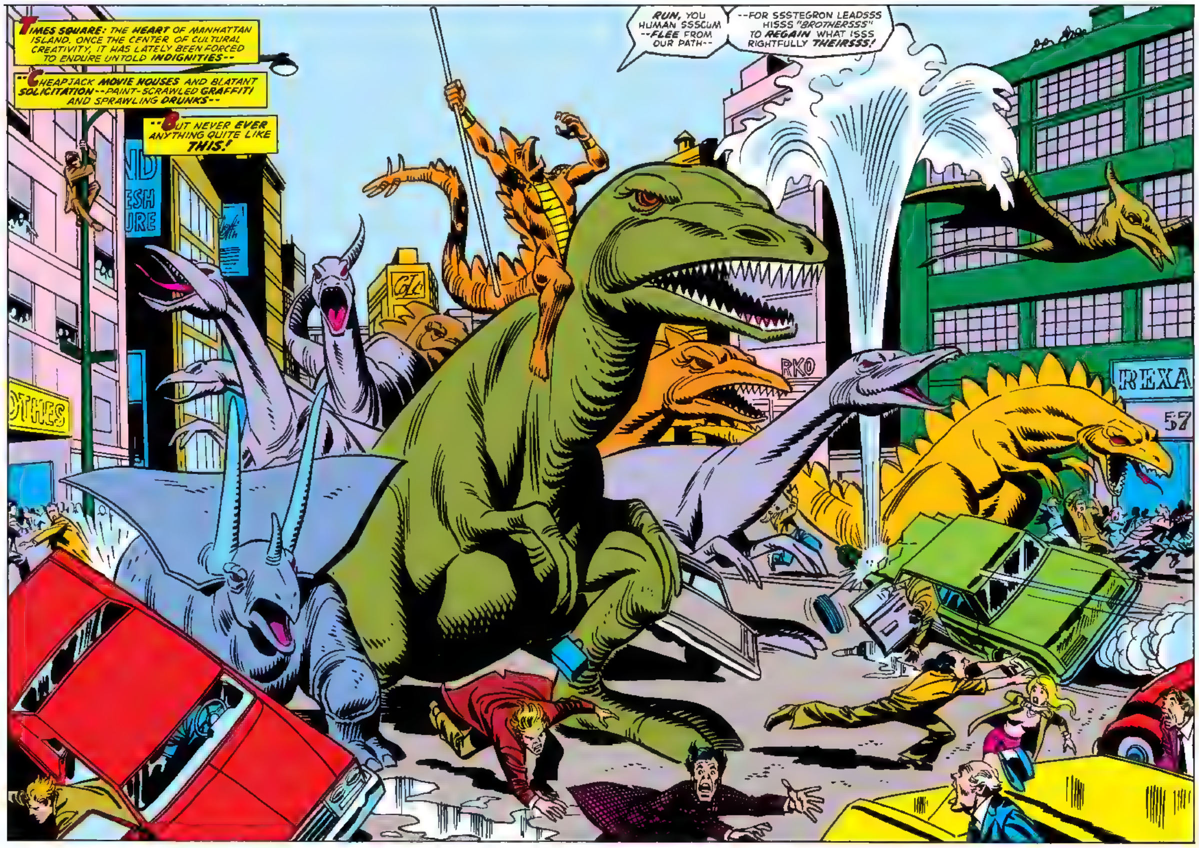
--AND USSSE MY TAIL--TO SSSTRIKE!
BWOMM!
WEB-HEADED CRETIN! DID YOU TRULY THINK TO PREVENT MY MOSSST SSSACRED MISSSION?
A PITY YOU'LL NOT BE ABLE INSSSTEAD TO WITNESSS ITSSS ULTIMATE SSSUCCESSS--
--BUT THAT'SSS THE WAY THE SSSPIDER TUMBLESSS!
AND AS THE WEB-SLINGER PLUMMETS TOWARD THE CHILL WATERS OFF THE COAST OF NEW YORK--
--LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION SEVERAL MINUTES BACK IN TIME--TO THE PARK AVENUE HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS...
MASTER T'CHALLA!
THANK HEAVEN YOU'VE NOT LEFT AS WELL.
JARVIS, WHAT IS IT?
YOU LOOK AS IF YOU'VE SEEN THE PROVERBIAL GHOST.
NOT I, SIR--BUT THE MULTI-DIGITAL SENSOR SCAN MR. STARK RECENTLY INSTALLED.
IT HAS SPOTTED A MYSTERIOUS VESSEL OF GREAT SIZE COMING IN LOW AND FAST OFF THE EAST COAST--
--AND I THOUGHT AN INVESTIGATION OF SOME SORT MIGHT BE IN ORDER IF--
ENOUGH SAID, JARVIS. I'LL CHECK IT OUT ON MY WAY BACK TO WAKANDA.
MOMENTS AFTER, A SLEEK AVENGERS' QUIN-JET STREAKS INTO THE CLOUD-SWEPT SKY--

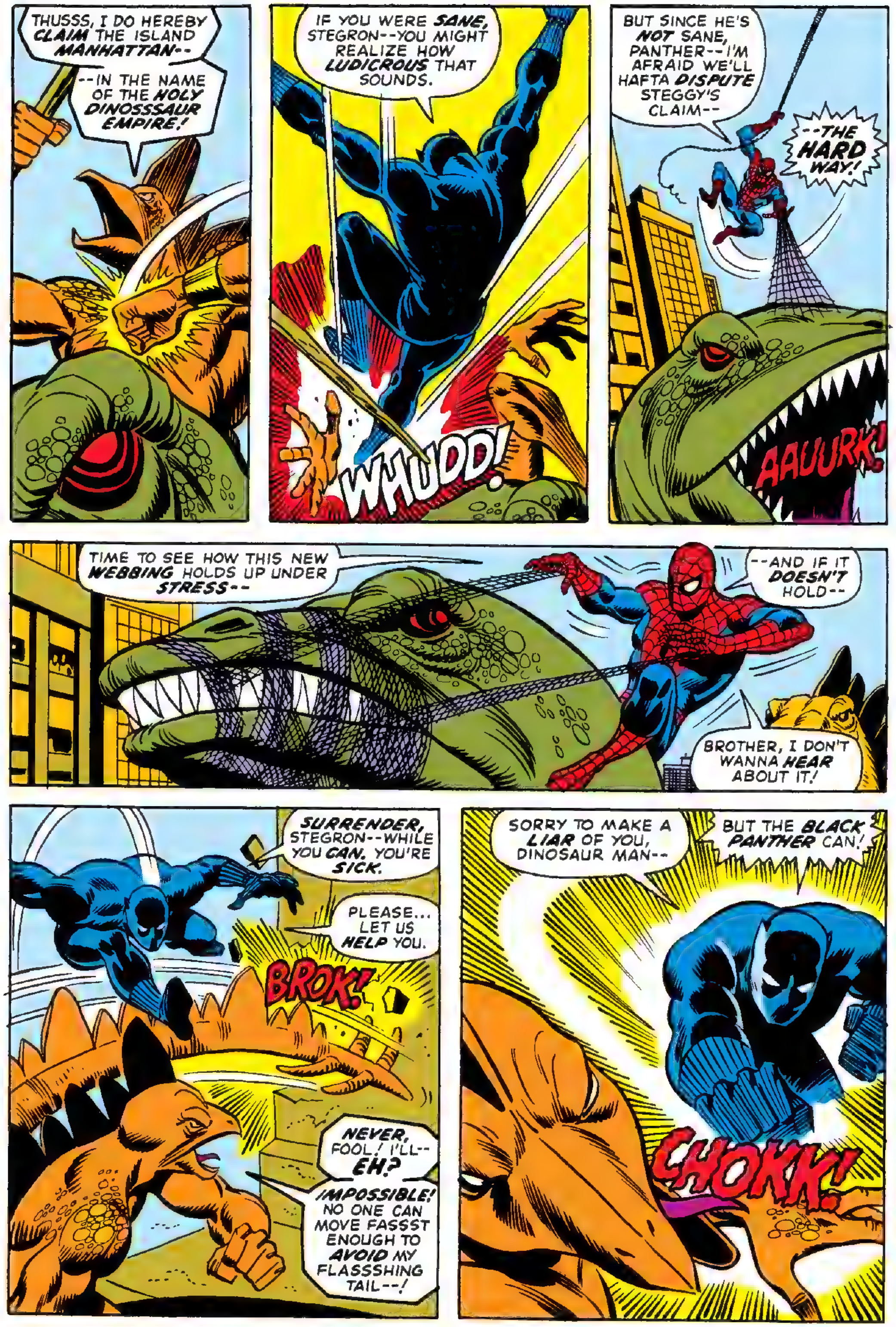

--AND AT ITS CONTROLS IS T'CHALLA, CHIEF OF THE WAKANDA NATION--
--THE BATTLE-WISE BLACK PANTHER!
IT FELT GOOD--BATTLING ALONGSIDE THE AVENGERS ONCE MORE--
--BUT UNTIL THE TROUBLE IN MY HOMELAND IS SETTLED,* I CANNOT LONG REMAIN AWAY FROM IT--
*AS SEEN CURRENTLY IN THE PAGES OF JUNGLE ACTION.--RT.
--NOR WOULD I WISH TO, SINCE--!
THERE IT IS--THE SHIP JARVIS DETECTED, HEADING--
BY T'CHAKA'S EYES! SOMEONE'S FALLEN FROM THE VESSEL'S SIDE!
ONLY ONE POSSIBLE CHANCE TO SAVE HIM--
AUTO PIL
MUST SET EXACTLY THE RIGHT COURSE--LOCK THE QUIN-JET ON AUTOMATIC PILOT--
--THEN PRAY TO ALL THE GODS OF MY FATHERS THAT THE BLACK PANTHER'S TIMING IS EVERYTHING IT IS SAID TO BE--
--FOR IF I'M OFF BY A FRACTION OF A SECOND--
--IF MY CATCH IS NOT ABSOLUTELY PERFECT--
--I WILL SURELY BREAK MY QUARRY'S NECK--
--AND, QUITE POSSIBLY, MY OWN!
BUT IN THE NEXT STARTLING INSTANT--
GOT HIM!
MY CATCH WAS... SPIDER-MAN!?!
NO CHANCE FOR ME TO DISCOVER THE MEANING OF THIS WHILE DANGLING OUT HERE--
--SO--A QUICK TWIST OF THE TRAPEZE BAR TO ACTIVATE THE RETRACTION MECHANISM--
--AND PERHAPS I'LL GET MY ANSWERS INSIDE.


SHORTLY...
FEELING ANY BETTER NOW, SPIDER-MAN?
UUNNHH--SURE. I LIKE HAVING ELEPHANTS TAP-DANCE ON MY HEAD.
HEY--HOW'D I GET HERE?
I SAVED YOU. MY NAME IS...
THE BLACK PANTHER. YEAH--I KNOW. LOOKS LIKE I OWE THE AVENGERS ONE FOR SNATCHING ME FROM BIG BAD--
--STEGRON! BLAST--HE'S GONE--
--AND TAKEN HIS DINOSAUR ARMY WITH HIM!
PANTHY, HAVE I GOT A STORY TO TELL YOU.
...AND SINCE THE OTHER AVENGERS AREN'T AROUND--
--THE PANTHER HAS AGREED TO HELP US TRACK DOWN STEGRON.
THANK YOU, PANTHER. WITH THE WORLD'S GREATEST TRACKER ON OUR SIDE--
--PERHAPS WE DO HAVE A CHANCE OF FINDING VINCENT BEFORE HE CAN CARRY OUT HIS PLANS.
IT'S MY FAULT--ALL MY FAULT--! IF I HADN'T CREATED THE SERUM, STEGRON WOULD NEVER HAVE...
THEN WHY DON'T YOU UNCREATE IT, DR. CONNORS?
FIND A WAY TO CURE STEGRON--AND WE'LL ALL REST A LITTLE EASIER.
IT'LL BE DIFFICULT--THE FORMULA LACKS THE BUILT-IN ANTIDOTE OF MY LIZARD SERUM--
--BUT I'LL DO MY BEST.
WHAT'LL YOU TWO DO IN THE MEAN-TIME?
BORROW THE REST OF YOUR LAB FACILITIES, DOC--IF YOU DON'T MIND.
SPIDER-MAN AND I HAVE A FEW PREPARATIONS TO MAKE BEFORE WE'LL BE READY FOR BATTLE--
--THEN WE'RE GOING TO FIND STEGRON!


THEN YOU'D BETTER HURRY, PANTHER--OR HE MAY FIND YOU FIRST. FOR, SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THE JUNGLE CALLED CENTRAL PARK...
OKAY, SISTERS-- JEST FORK OVER THEM FAT LITTLE PURSES--
--AN' NOBODY'S GONNA GET HURT.
MY LAND, EMMA--A MUGSTER!
CORA, I TOLD YOU WE SHOULDN'T WALK THRU--
NO. OH-- NO.!
I-IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! IT CAN'T BE--!
AHH, C'MON, SISTERS-- THIS SORT'A THING HAPPENS EVERY DAY.
FOLKS OUGHT'A BE USED TO IT BY NOW.
SORRY, FRIEND "MUGSTER"--BUT SOMEHOW WE DOUBT THAT THIS SORT OF THING HAPPENS EVERY DAY.
HELP-- HELP-- POLICEEE--!
BWOK!
--SIMPLY BECAUSE IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT STEGRON COMES TO TOWN!
THAT'SSS RIGHT, YOU SSSENILE OLD FOOLSSS-- RUN!
RUN FROM ME ASSS ALL WILL SSSOON RUN!
FLEE BEFORE THE MAJESTIC MIGHT OF SSSTEGRON-- LORD OF THE DINO-SSSAURSSS!

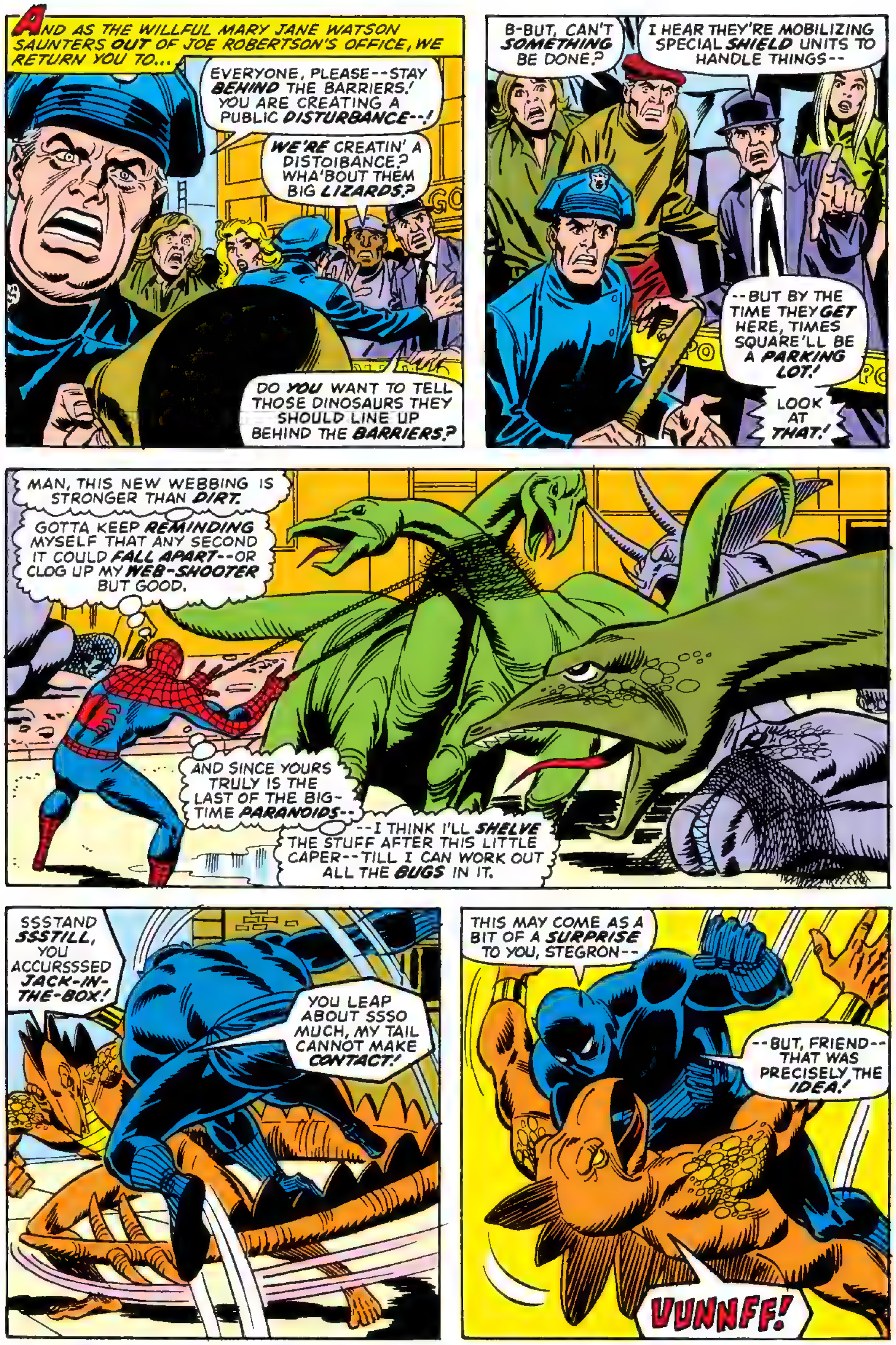
AND THAT SEEMS SOUND ADVICE, INDEED--
--FOR AS THE DINOSAUR MAN AND HIS REPTILIAN HORDES BURST OUT OF THE PARK AND INTO THE STREET--
TAXI
--PURE PANDEMONIUM BREAKS LOOSE ON CENTRAL PARK WEST!
WHILE, IN THE LABORATORY OF DR. CURT CONNORS...
SO CLOSE--AND YET THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE FORMULA I JUST CAN'T PIN DOWN.
HOPE YOU GENTS ARE HAVING BETTER LUCK.
NOT MUCH. THIS NEW SUPER-STRONG WEB FLUID THE PANTHER HELPED ME CONCOCT IS UNSTABLE AT BEST.
YOU COULD NEVER USE IT REGULARLY--BUT IT WILL SERVE WELL ENOUGH IN THIS INSTANCE TO HOLD STEGRON'S...
...DINOSAURS! THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS--DINOSAURS--
--WHO, ACCORDING TO EYE-WITNESS REPORTS, ARE AT THIS VERY MOMENT LUMBERING DOWN BROADWAY TOWARDS TIMES SQUARE...
STEGRON!
WELL, YOU'VE GOTTA GIVE THE GUY CREDIT, PANTHY--
--WHEN HE DOES THINGS, HE DOES 'EM IN A BIG WAY!
LET'S JUST HOPE THEY'RE NOT TOO BIG, WEB-HEAD.
C'MON, PUSSYCAT--WHAT COULD BE TOO MUCH FOR A PAIR OF BONA FIDE SUPER-STARS LIKE US TO HANDLE?
TAKE A LOOK AT THAT, WALL-CRAWLER--AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF!

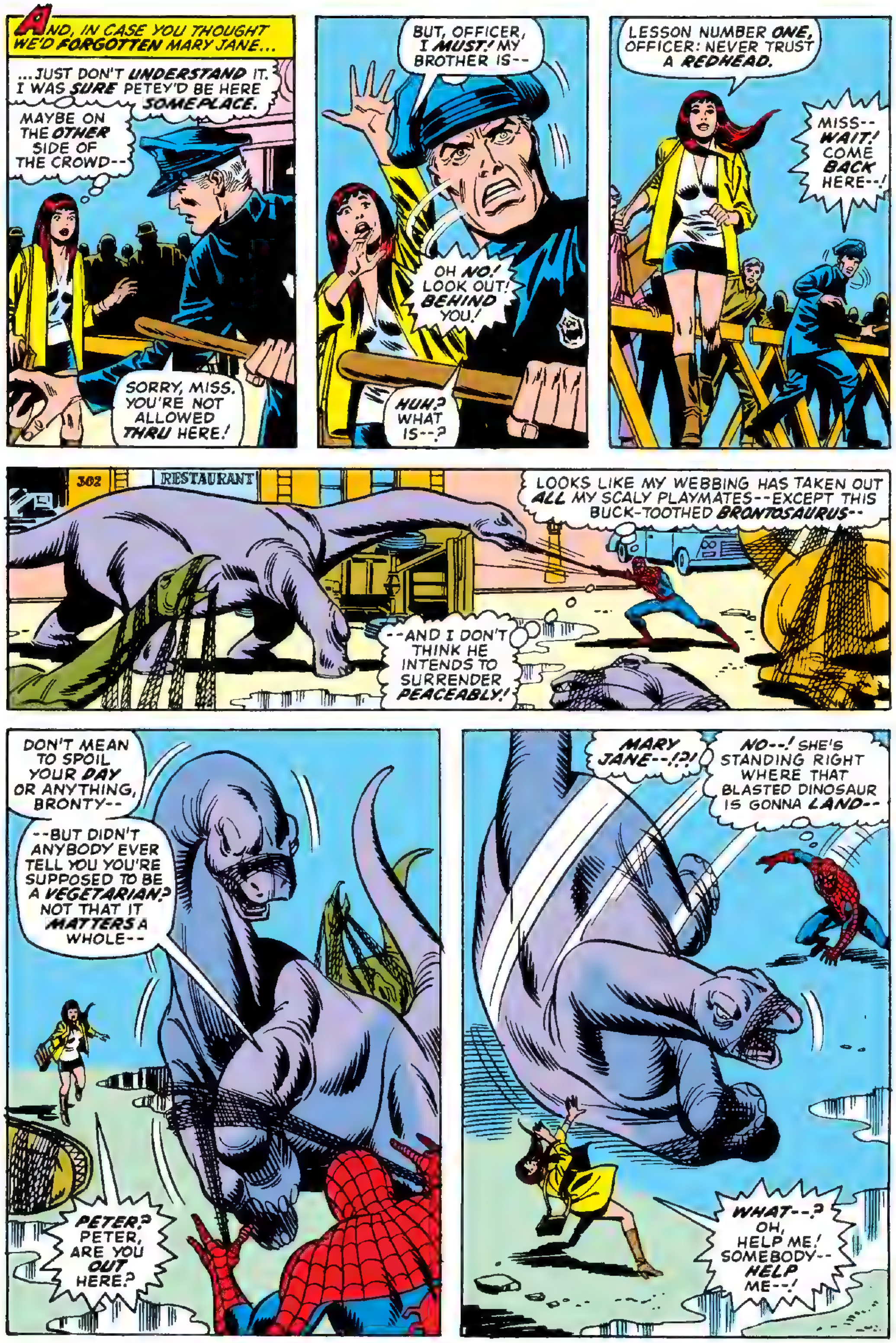

TIMES SQUARE: THE HEART OF MANHATTAN ISLAND. ONCE THE CENTER OF CULTURAL CREATIVITY, IT HAS LATELY BEEN FORCED TO ENDURE UNTOLD INDIGNITIES--
--CHEAPJACK MOVIE HOUSES AND BLATANT SOLICITATION--PAINT-SCRAWLED GRAFFITI AND SPRAWLING DRUNKS--
--BUT NEVER EVER ANYTHING QUITE LIKE THIS!
RUN, YOU HUMAN SSSCUM --FLEE FROM OUR PATH--
--FOR SSSTEGRON LEADSSS HISSS "BROTHERSSS" TO REGAIN WHAT ISSS RIGHTFULLY THEIRSSS!
RKO
REXA
57

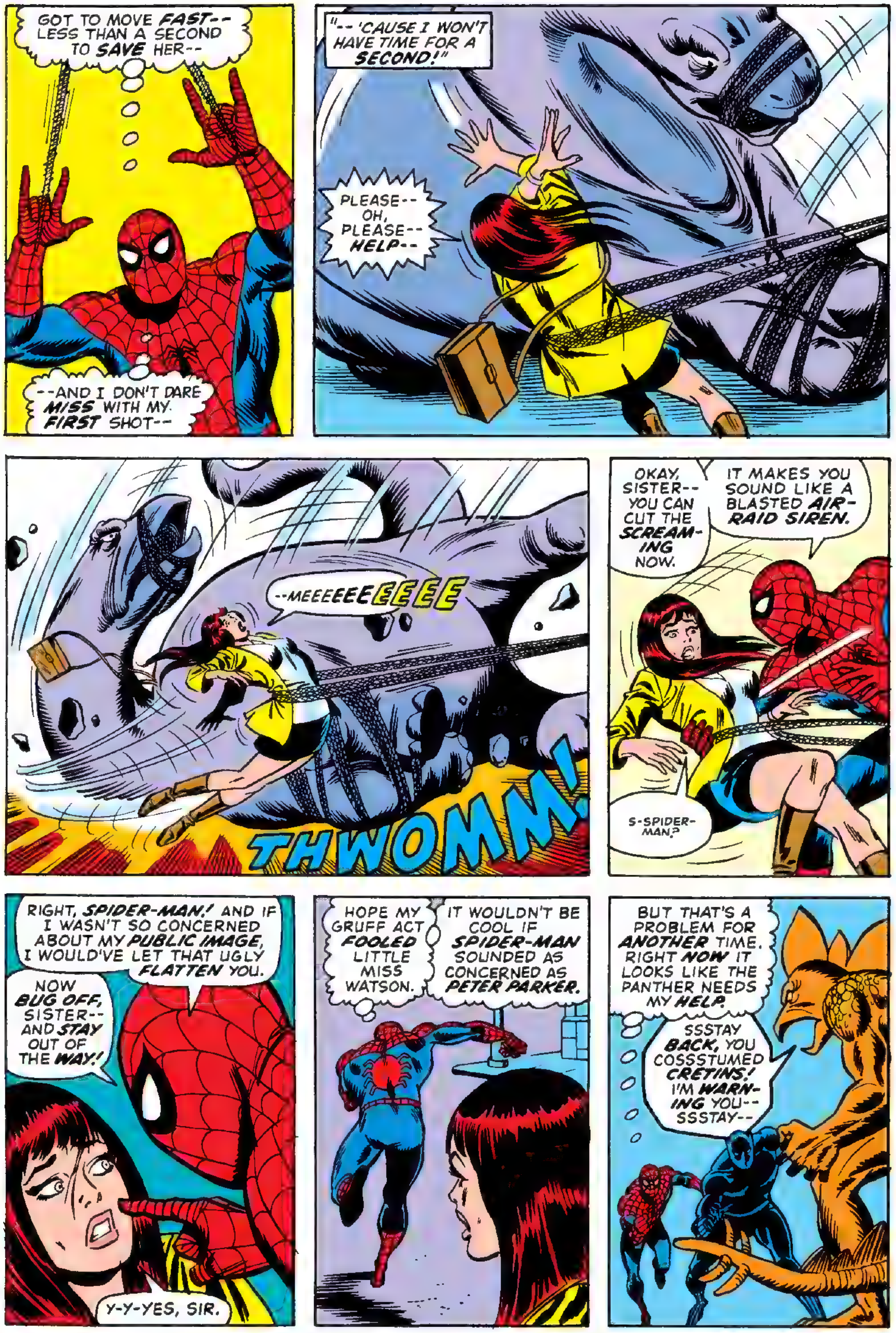


THUSSS, I DO HEREBY CLAIM THE ISLAND MANHATTAN--
--IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY DINOSSSAUR EMPIRE!
IF YOU WERE SANE, STEGRON--YOU MIGHT REALIZE HOW LUDICROUS THAT SOUNDS.
WHUDD!
BUT SINCE HE'S NOT SANE, PANTHER--I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAFTA DISPUTE STEGGY'S CLAIM--
--THE HARD WAY!
AAUURK!
TIME TO SEE HOW THIS NEW WEBBING HOLDS UP UNDER STRESS--
--AND IF IT DOESN'T HOLD--
BROTHER, I DON'T WANNA HEAR ABOUT IT!
SURRENDER, STEGRON--WHILE YOU CAN. YOU'RE SICK.
PLEASE... LET US HELP YOU.
BROK!
NEVER, FOOL! I'LL-- EH?
IMPOSSIBLE! NO ONE CAN MOVE FASSST ENOUGH TO AVOID MY FLASSSHING TAIL--!
SORRY TO MAKE A LIAR OF YOU, DINOSAUR MAN--
BUT THE BLACK PANTHER CAN!
CHOKK!

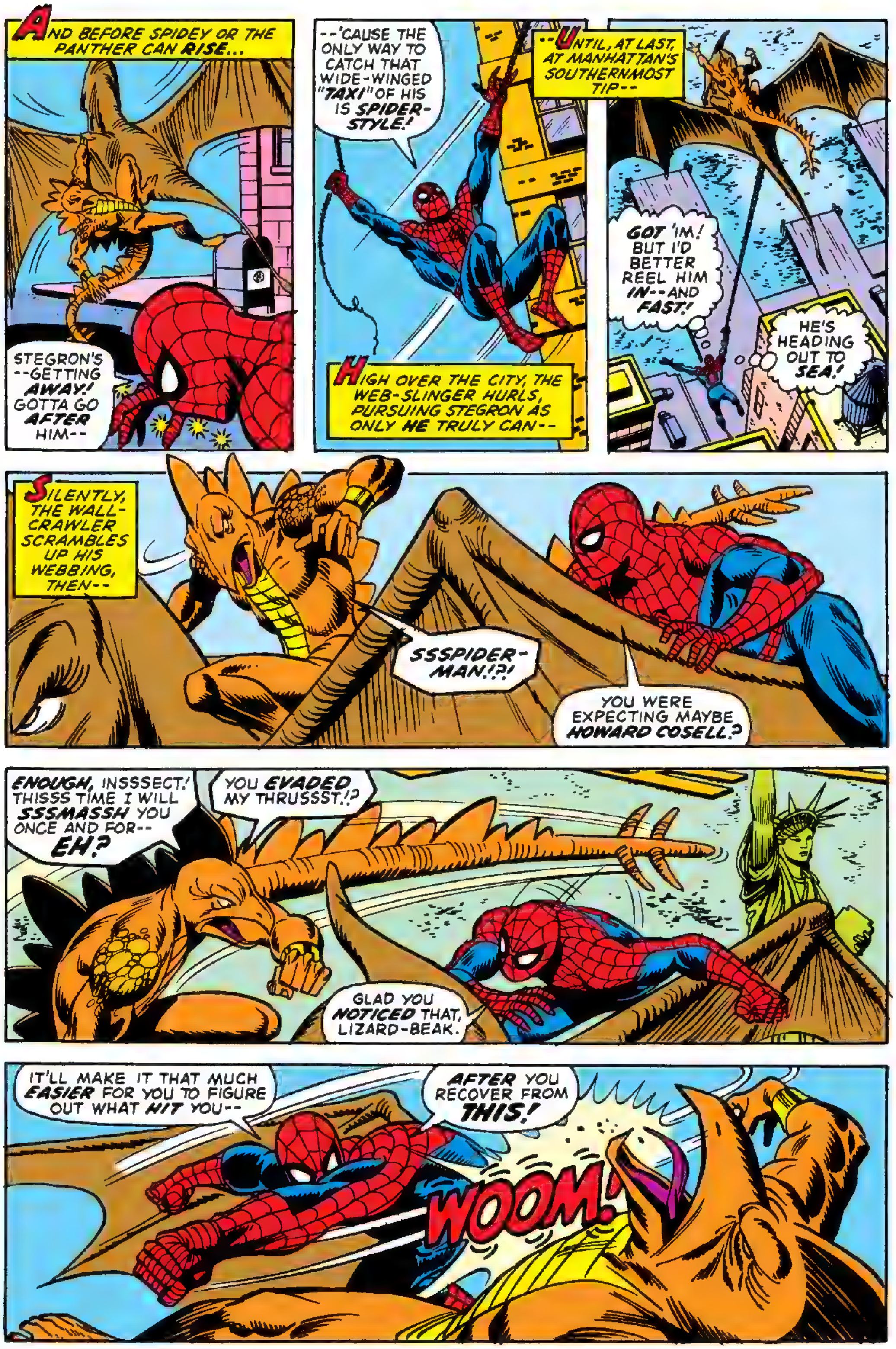
AND WHILE THE BATTLE RAGES HOT AND HEAVY AT 42ND STREET AND BROADWAY-- A FEW BLOCKS FURTHER NORTH, AT THE OFFICES OF THE DAILY BUGLE...
ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM, MR. ROBERTSON?
PETER HASN'T BEEN AT HIS APARTMENT SINCE YESTERDAY-- AND I THOUGHT--
SORRY, MARY JANE-- BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN PARKER EITHER.
STILL--IF HE SHOWS UP HERE, I'LL TELL HIM--
THUNDERATION! HAS EVERYBODY IN THIS RAVING LOONIE BIN OF A CITY GONE CRAZY?
ACCORDING TO THE LATEST FLASH FROM OUR "CRACK" WIRE SERVICE--
--THERE ARE DINOSAURS ON BROADWAY!
WHOA, JONAH-- RUN THAT PAST ME AGAIN. THERE ARE WHAT ON WHAT?
YOU HEARD ME THE FIRST TIME, ROBBIE--
AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THAT WEB-HEADED MENACE AND THE BLACK PANTHER ARE SUPPOSEDLY SLUGGING IT OUT WITH THEM.
THEN I GUESS THAT'S MY CUE TO TODDLE ON OUT OF HERE, TIGERS.
'CAUSE WHEREVER YOU FIND SPIDER-MAN THESE DAYS, YOU'RE BOUND TO FIND PETER PARKER-- SNAPPING THE 8X10 GLOSSIES.
TAKE CARE, GENTLEMEN. I'LL LET YOU KNOW HOW THINGS ARE AT THE "FRONT."
WATSON--JUST WHERE IN BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
JONAH IS RIGHT, MARY JANE. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU OUT THERE.
DON'T SWEAT IT, GUYS. DANGER IS MY MIDDLE NAME.
I HAVE IT MONOGRAMMED ON ALL OF MY TOWELS.


AND AS THE WILLFUL MARY JANE WATSON SAUNTERS OUT OF JOE ROBERTSON'S OFFICE, WE RETURN YOU TO...
EVERYONE, PLEASE--STAY BEHIND THE BARRIERS! YOU ARE CREATING A PUBLIC DISTURBANCE--!
WE'RE CREATIN' A DISTOIBANCE? WHA'BOUT THEM BIG LIZARDS?
DO YOU WANT TO TELL THOSE DINOSAURS THEY SHOULD LINE UP BEHIND THE BARRIERS?
B-BUT, CAN'T SOMETHING BE DONE?
I HEAR THEY'RE MOBILIZING SPECIAL SHIELD UNITS TO HANDLE THINGS--
--BUT BY THE TIME THEY GET HERE, TIMES SQUARE'LL BE A PARKING LOT!
LOOK AT THAT!
MAN, THIS NEW WEBBING IS STRONGER THAN DIRT.
GOTTA KEEP REMINDING MYSELF THAT ANY SECOND IT COULD FALL APART--OR CLOG UP MY WEB-SHOOTER BUT GOOD.
AND SINCE YOURS TRULY IS THE LAST OF THE BIG-TIME PARANOIDS--
--I THINK I'LL SHELVE THE STUFF AFTER THIS LITTLE CAPER--TILL I CAN WORK OUT ALL THE BUGS IN IT.
SSSTAND SSSTILL, YOU ACCURSSSED JACK-IN-THE-BOX!
YOU LEAP ABOUT SSSO MUCH, MY TAIL CANNOT MAKE CONTACT!
THIS MAY COME AS A BIT OF A SURPRISE TO YOU, STEGRON--
--BUT, FRIEND--THAT WAS PRECISELY THE IDEA!
UUNNFF!

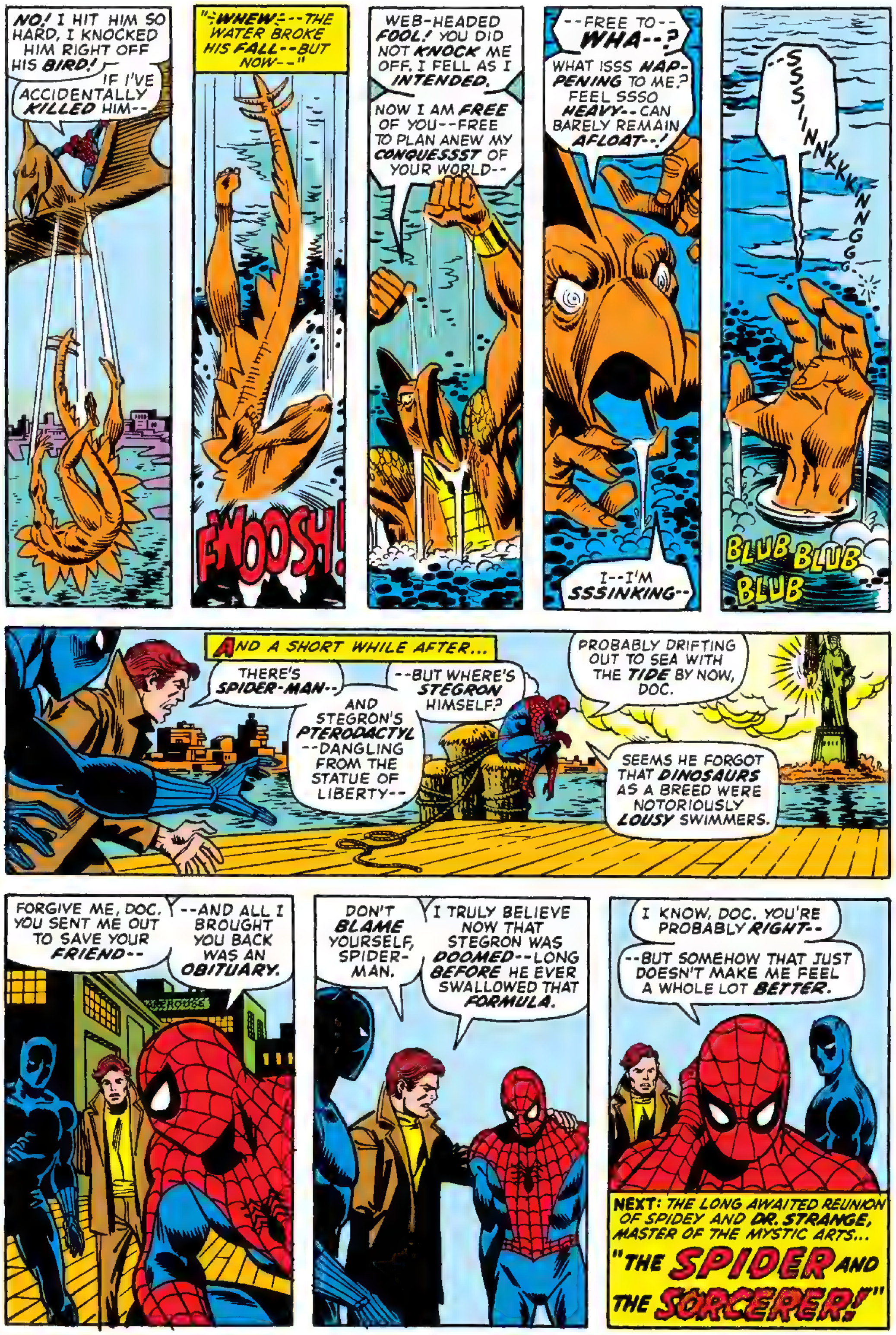

AND, IN CASE YOU THOUGHT WE'D FORGOTTEN MARY JANE...
...JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. I WAS SURE PETEY'D BE HERE SOMEPLACE.
MAYBE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CROWD--
SORRY, MISS. YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED THRU HERE!
BUT, OFFICER, I MUST! MY BROTHER IS--
OH NO! LOOK OUT! BEHIND YOU!
HUH? WHAT IS--?
LESSON NUMBER ONE, OFFICER: NEVER TRUST A REDHEAD.
MISS-- WAIT! COME BACK HERE--!
302
RESTAURANT
LOOKS LIKE MY WEBBING HAS TAKEN OUT ALL MY SCALY PLAYMATES--EXCEPT THIS BUCK-TOOTHED BRONTOSAURUS--
--AND I DON'T THINK HE INTENDS TO SURRENDER PEACEABLY!
DON'T MEAN TO SPOIL YOUR DAY OR ANYTHING, BRONTY--
--BUT DIDN'T ANYBODY EVER TELL YOU YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A VEGETARIAN? NOT THAT IT MATTERS A WHOLE--
PETER? PETER, ARE YOU OUT HERE?
MARY JANE--!?!
NO--! SHE'S STANDING RIGHT WHERE THAT BLASTED DINOSAUR IS GONNA LAND--
WHAT--? OH, HELP ME! SOMEBODY-- HELP ME--!


GOT TO MOVE FAST-- LESS THAN A SECOND TO SAVE HER--
--AND I DON'T DARE MISS WITH MY FIRST SHOT--
"--'CAUSE I WON'T HAVE TIME FOR A SECOND!"
PLEASE-- OH, PLEASE-- HELP--
--MEEEEEEEEEE
THWOMM!
OKAY, SISTER-- YOU CAN CUT THE SCREAMING NOW.
IT MAKES YOU SOUND LIKE A BLASTED AIR-RAID SIREN.
S-SPIDER-MAN?
RIGHT, SPIDER-MAN! AND IF I WASN'T SO CONCERNED ABOUT MY PUBLIC IMAGE, I WOULD'VE LET THAT UGLY LITTLE FLATTEN YOU.
NOW BUG OFF, SISTER-- AND STAY OUT OF THE WAY!
Y-Y-YES, SIR.
HOPE MY GRUFF ACT FOOLED LITTLE MISS WATSON.
IT WOULDN'T BE COOL IF SPIDER-MAN SOUNDED AS CONCERNED AS PETER PARKER.
BUT THAT'S A PROBLEM FOR ANOTHER TIME. RIGHT NOW IT LOOKS LIKE THE PANTHER NEEDS MY HELP.
SSSTAY BACK, YOU COSSSTUMED CRETINS! I'M WARNING YOU-- SSSTAY--

--BACK HERE, MISTER. I SAID: COME--
NEVER MIND, FRED. THIS GENT HAS TOP PRIORITY CLEARANCE FROM SHIELD.
STRAIGHT AHEAD, DR. CONNORS.
THANK YOU, OFFICER. I ONLY PRAY I'M IN TIME!
DR. CONNORS, PLEASE--STAY OUT OF THIS, MAN!
CONNORSSS? YOU GULLIBLE CRIPPLE, GET OUT OF MY SSSIGHT!
STEGRON--VINCENT--I BEG YOU--LISTEN TO ME!
I'VE JUST COME FROM OUR LAB--FROM INVESTIGATING THE SERUM YOU SWALLOWED--
BUS STOP
--AND YOU MUST--MUST LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY--
VINCENT...THERE IS NO CURE FOR YOUR CONDITION.
"NO CURE"--TO BE AS HE IS NOW FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.
FOR AN INSTANT, STEGRON PONDERS THIS NEW CONCEPTION OF SELF--
--AND HIS REACTION TO THE THOUGHT IS MOST VIOLENT INDEED!
SPAK-T!
THEN, THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS ACCOUNTED FOR, STEGRON ONCE AGAIN ROARS OUT WITH THE UNNATURAL CRY OF THE PRIMORDIAL BEAST--
--AND A LEATHER-WINGED "AIR FORCE" COMES HURTLING TO THE DINOSAUR-LORD'S RESCUE--
--SENDING A STARTLED PAIR OF SUPER-HEROES SPRAWLING TO THE STREET--
THWOK!
BWAKK!

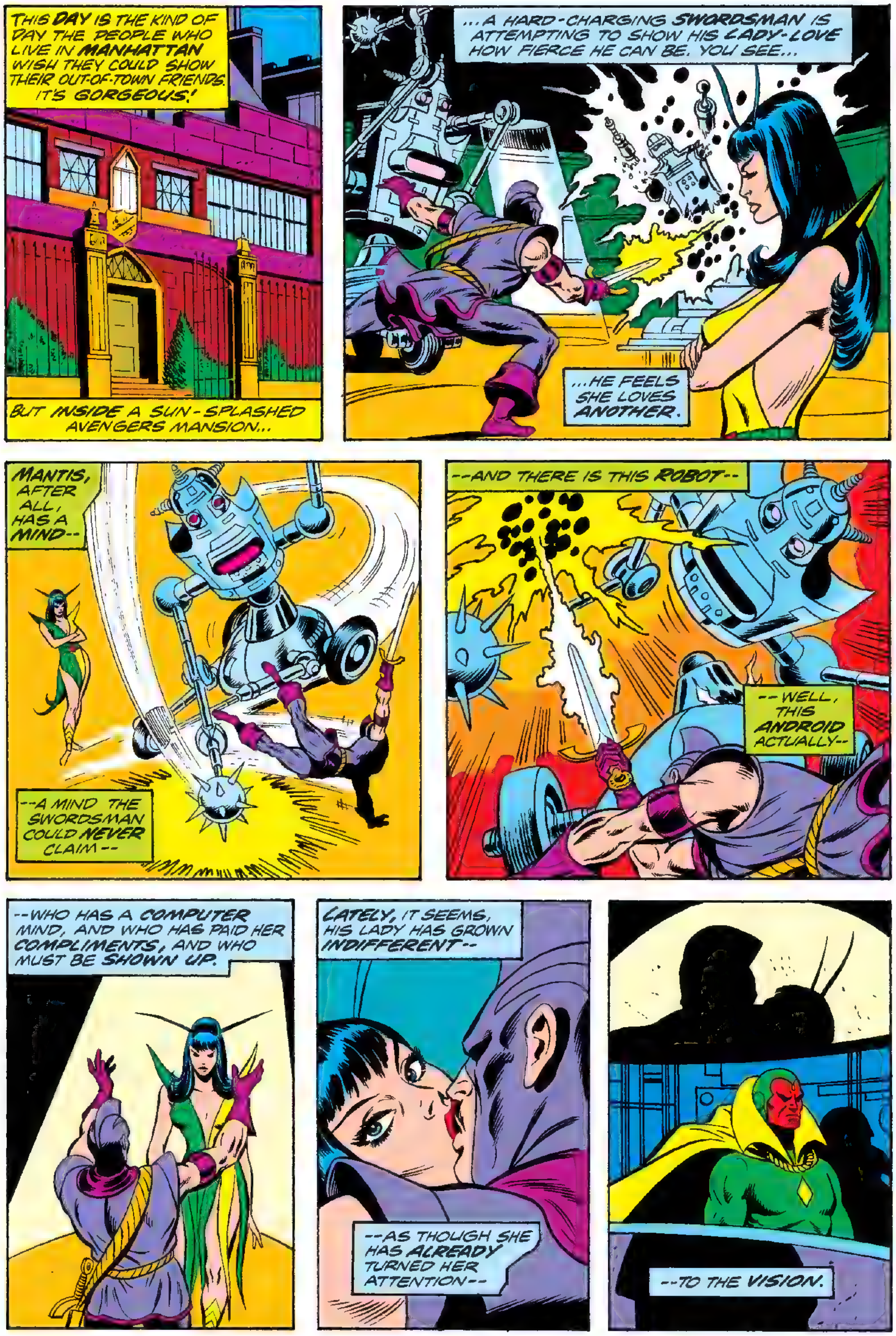


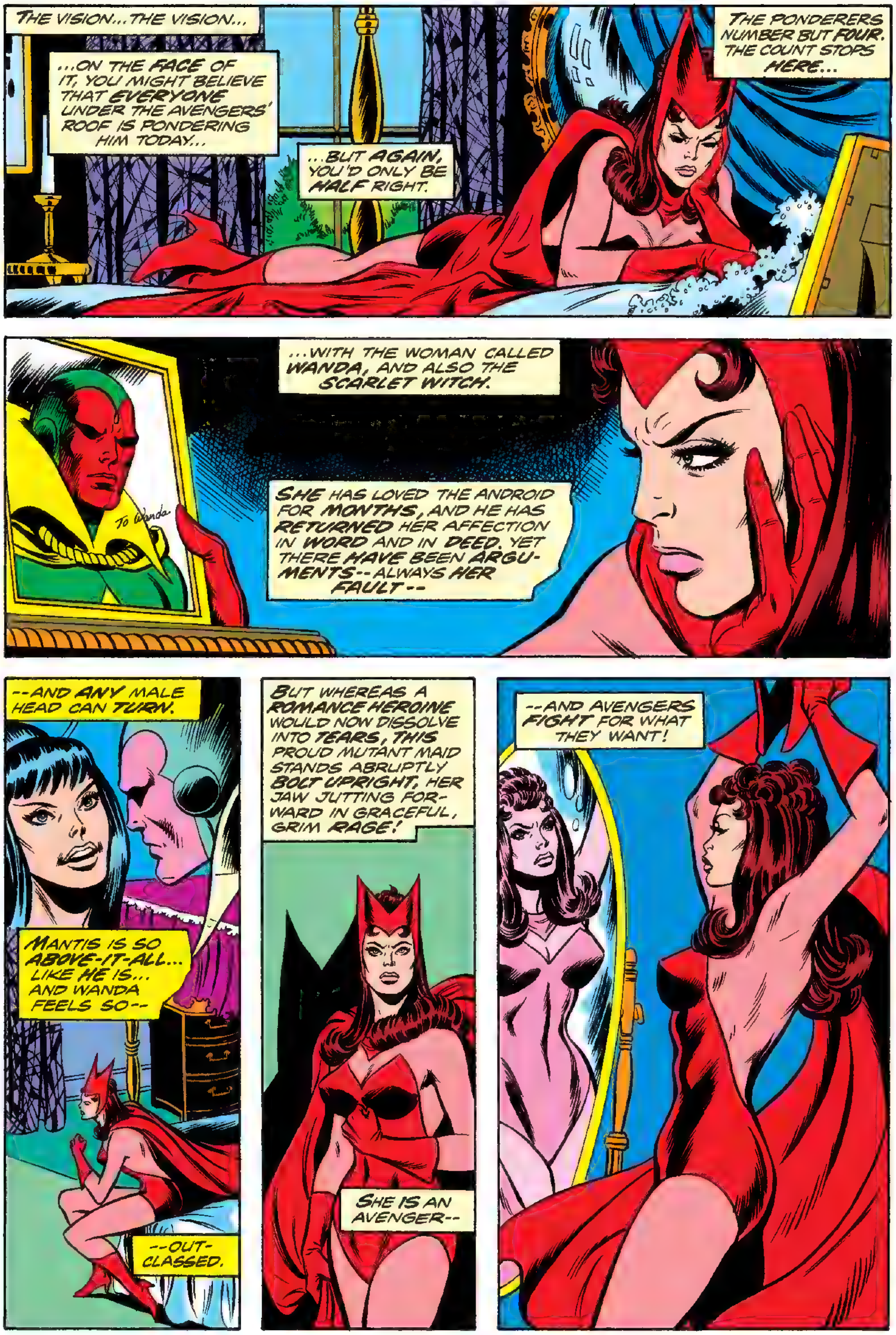
AND BEFORE SPIDEY OR THE PANTHER CAN RISE...
STEGRON'S --GETTING AWAY! GOTTA GO AFTER HIM--
--'CAUSE THE ONLY WAY TO CATCH THAT WIDE-WINGED "TAXI" OF HIS IS SPIDER-STYLE!
HIGH OVER THE CITY, THE WEB-SLINGER HURLS, PURSUING STEGRON AS ONLY HE TRULY CAN--
--UNTIL, AT LAST, AT MANHATTAN'S SOUTHERNMOST TIP--
GOT 'IM! BUT I'D BETTER REEL HIM IN--AND FAST!
HE'S HEADING OUT TO SEA!
SILENTLY, THE WALL-CRAWLER SCRAMBLES UP HIS WEBBING, THEN--
SSSPIDER-MAN!?!
YOU WERE EXPECTING MAYBE HOWARD COSELL?
ENOUGH, INSSSECT! THISSS TIME I WILL SSSMASSH YOU ONCE AND FOR-- EH?
YOU EVADED MY THRUSSST!?
GLAD YOU NOTICED THAT, LIZARD-BEAK.
IT'LL MAKE IT THAT MUCH EASIER FOR YOU TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HIT YOU--
AFTER YOU RECOVER FROM THIS!
WOOM!


NO! I HIT HIM SO HARD, I KNOCKED HIM RIGHT OFF HIS BIRD!
IF I'VE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED HIM--
"--WHEW!--THE WATER BROKE HIS FALL--BUT NOW--"
FWOOSH!
WEB-HEADED FOOL! YOU DID NOT KNOCK ME OFF. I FELL AS I INTENDED.
NOW I AM FREE OF YOU--FREE TO PLAN ANEW MY CONQUESSST OF YOUR WORLD--
--FREE TO--
WHA--?
WHAT ISSS HAPPENING TO ME? FEEL SSSO HEAVY--CAN BARELY REMAIN AFLOAT--!
I--I'M SSSINKING--
--SSSIINNKKKNNGG--
BLUB BLUB BLUB
AND A SHORT WHILE AFTER...
THERE'S SPIDER-MAN--
--BUT WHERE'S STEGRON HIMSELF?
AND STEGRON'S PTERODACTYL --DANGLING FROM THE STATUE OF LIBERTY--
PROBABLY DRIFTING OUT TO SEA WITH THE TIDE BY NOW, DOC.
SEEMS HE FORGOT THAT DINOSAURS AS A BREED WERE NOTORIOUSLY LOUSY SWIMMERS.
FORGIVE ME, DOC. YOU SENT ME OUT TO SAVE YOUR FRIEND--
--AND ALL I BROUGHT YOU BACK WAS AN OBITUARY.
DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, SPIDER-MAN.
I TRULY BELIEVE NOW THAT STEGRON WAS DOOMED--LONG BEFORE HE EVER SWALLOWED THAT FORMULA.
I KNOW, DOC. YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT--
--BUT SOMEHOW THAT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER.
NEXT: THE LONG AWAITED REUNION OF SPIDEY AND DR. STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS...
"THE SPIDER AND THE SORCERER!"

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
25¢
126 AUG 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
IRON MAN! VISION! CAPTAIN AMERICA-- EVEN THE MIGHTY THOR HIMSELF-- NONE CAN STAND AGAINST-- KLAW!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, KLAW! BUT, IF THOSE TITANS FELL-- WHAT CHANCE HAS THE BLACK PANTHER??
BUT WHERE IS THE ONE I HATE MOST? WHERE IS THE AFRICAN AVENGER?

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
ALL THE SOUNDS and SIGHTS of DEATH!
FEATURING: THE MONUMENTAL VILLAINY OF KLAW AND SOLARR!
NOW, MAYBE YOU'RE SAYING 'A-HA! THIS MUST BE ONE OF THOSE SYMBOLIC SPLASH PAGES! KLAW AND SOLARR COULDN'T TOWER OVER AVENGERS MANSION LIKE THIS!"
WELL, THAT'S WHAT THE MIGHTY AVENGERS WOULD SAY, TOO -- BUT BOTH THEY AND YOU WOULD ONLY BE HALF RIGHT.
FOR THE WHOLE STORY... YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.
STEVE ENGLEHART SAME OLD SCRIPTER | BOB BROWN PRODIGAL PENCILER | DAVE COCKRUM INGENUE INKER | JOHN COSTANZA, lettering D. GOLDBERG, colorist | ROY THOMAS EDITOR


THIS DAY IS THE KIND OF DAY THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN MANHATTAN WISH THEY COULD SHOW THEIR OUT-OF-TOWN FRIENDS. IT'S GORGEOUS!
BUT INSIDE A SUN-SPLASHED AVENGERS MANSION...
...A HARD-CHARGING SWORDSMAN IS ATTEMPTING TO SHOW HIS LADY-LOVE HOW FIERCE HE CAN BE. YOU SEE...
...HE FEELS SHE LOVES ANOTHER.
MANTIS, AFTER ALL, HAS A MIND--
--A MIND THE SWORDSMAN COULD NEVER CLAIM--
--AND THERE IS THIS ROBOT--
--WELL, THIS ANDROID ACTUALLY--
--WHO HAS A COMPUTER MIND, AND WHO HAS PAID HER COMPLIMENTS, AND WHO MUST BE SHOWN UP.
LATELY, IT SEEMS, HIS LADY HAS GROWN INDIFFERENT--
--AS THOUGH SHE HAS ALREADY TURNED HER ATTENTION--
--TO THE VISION.


THE VISION... THE VISION...
...ON THE FACE OF IT, YOU MIGHT BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE UNDER THE AVENGERS' ROOF IS PONDERING HIM TODAY...
...BUT AGAIN, YOU'D ONLY BE HALF RIGHT.
THE PONDERERS NUMBER BUT FOUR. THE COUNT STOPS HERE...
...WITH THE WOMAN CALLED WANDA, AND ALSO THE SCARLET WITCH.
To Wanda
SHE HAS LOVED THE ANDROID FOR MONTHS, AND HE HAS RETURNED HER AFFECTION IN WORD AND IN DEED. YET THERE HAVE BEEN ARGUMENTS--ALWAYS HER FAULT--
--AND ANY MALE HEAD CAN TURN.
MANTIS IS SO ABOVE-IT-ALL... LIKE HE IS... AND WANDA FEELS SO--
--OUT-CLASSED.
BUT WHEREAS A ROMANCE HEROINE WOULD NOW DISSOLVE INTO TEARS, THIS PROUD MUTANT MAID STANDS ABRUPTLY BOLT UPRIGHT, HER JAW JUTTING FORWARD IN GRACEFUL, GRIM RAGE!
SHE IS AN AVENGER--
--AND AVENGERS FIGHT FOR WHAT THEY WANT!

HOWEVER, WE'VE GONE ON RECORD THAT OTHER AVENGERS HAVE OTHER PROBLEMS TO WRESTLE WITH -- AND IRON MAN AND THOR SUPPLY THE PROOF.
THEIR CONCERN IS WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA -- FOR NO SMALL REASON.
THOU WOULDST BE CAPTAIN AMERICA NO MORE? *
* OBVIOUSLY, THIS TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE MOMENTOUS EVENTS OF CA&F #176. --ROY.
COME ON, THUNDER GOD. LEAVE HIM ALONE FOR NOW.
BUT THIS IS INCREDIBLE! 'TWAS WE OURSELVES WHO DID THAW HIS FROZEN BODY FROM THE ICE * --
--WE OURSELVES WHO DID STAND BESIDE HIM AS HE BEGAN HIS NEW LIFE!
* AVENGERS #4. --R.
IF I NEEDED A HISTORY LESSON, THOR, I'D GO TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY!
CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TRYING TO THINK?
LET'S GO, GOLDILOCKS. CAP'S ON EDGE NOW, AND TALKING WON'T DO EITHER OF YOU ANY GOOD.
COME ON OUT TO THE KITCHEN.
THIS WORRIES ME, OLD FRIEND -- IT REALLY DOES! ALL AMERICA'S BEEN DISILLUSIONED RECENTLY -- IN SPADES --
--BUT NO ONE MORE SO THAN CAPTAIN AMERICA!

NOW, ONLY ONE AVENGER REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR: THE PERENNIAL MAN APART, THE BLACK PANTHER.
ANOTHER TELEGRAM FROM WAKANDA, INQUIRING AFTER THE LENGTH OF MY STAY IN THE STATES THIS TIME.
MY PEOPLE ARE LOST WITHOUT THEIR PRINCE.
"ONCE, I BELIEVED IT OTHERWISE, AND LEFT MY HIDDEN KINGDOM IN THE HANDS OF MY FRIENDS.
"THE RESULT HAS BEEN CHAOS!*
*SEE JUNGLE ACTION #5 TO DATE. --ROY.
"YET CERTAINLY MY PRESENCE HERE HAS NOT BEEN SUPERFLUOUS. AS I LEARNED ANEW WHILE COMBATING THE THREAT OF THE LION GOD*--
"--EVIL MAY STRIKE ANYWHERE!
*AVENGERS #112. --ROY.
"THE AVENGERS WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST TO THE STRANGE GASES AND SUBTERRANEAN CREATURES OF THE TROGLODYTES IF I HADN'T BEEN WITH THEM."*
*#115.--R.
HOW CAN I ABANDON EITHER OF MY WORLDS-- AND YET, HOW CAN I CONTINUE TO TEAR MYSELF BETWEEN TH--
BY THE FIRST LION! THAT MAN--!

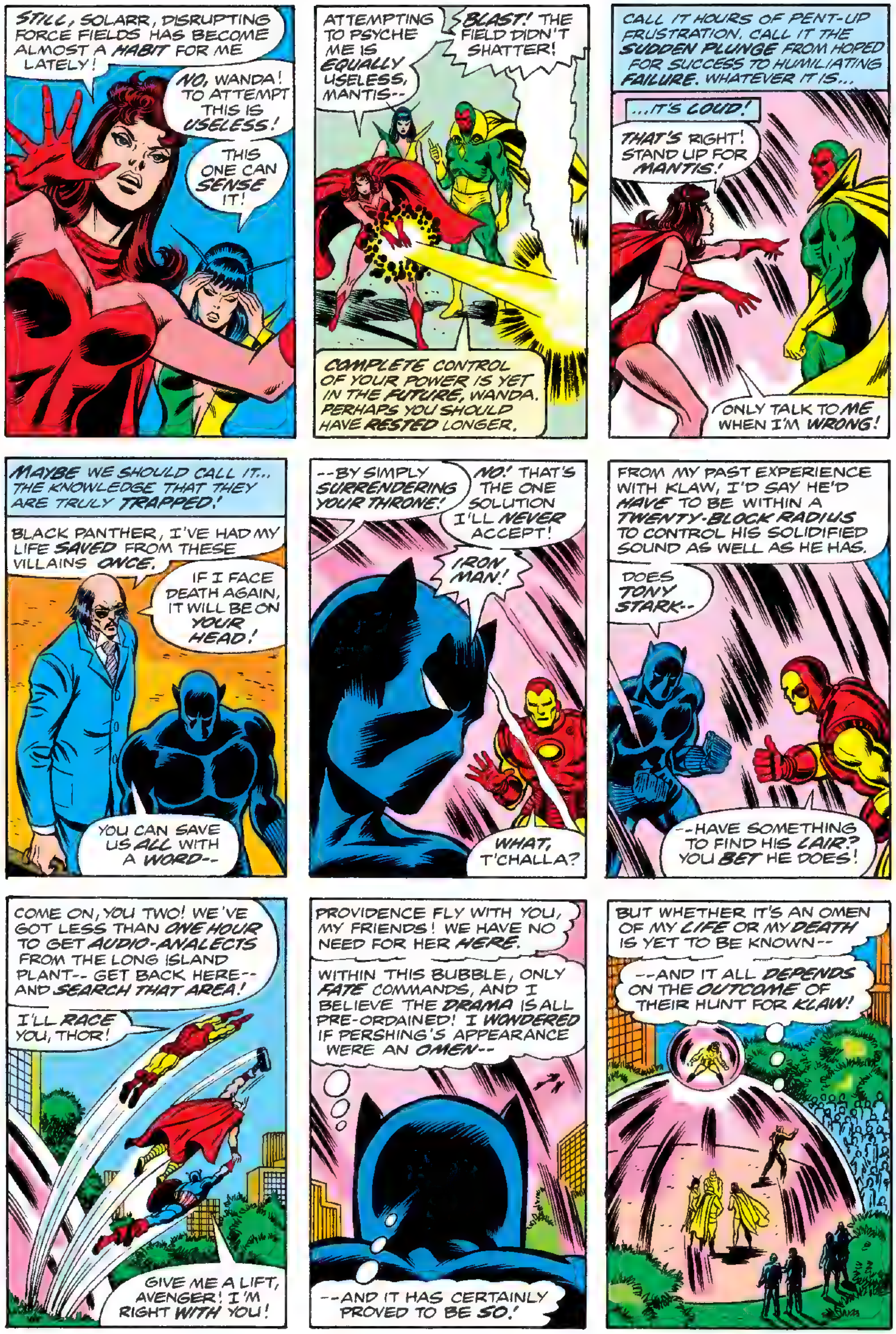
WHY SHOULD HE BE COMING HERE?
IS THIS SOME SORT OF MAD OMEN?
MASTER T'CHALLA! I WAS JUST ON MY WAY--!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, JARVIS. I CAME RUNNING TO OPEN THIS DOOR!
--RUNNING!
THERE IS NO NEED TO RING, MR. AMBASSADOR!
GOOD MORNING, PRINCE T'CHALLA. EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T SHAKE YOUR HAND, BUT THE TOUCH OF A BLACK MAN IS DIS-TASTEFUL TO ME--
--AS IS MY MISSION HERE.
NO DOUBT, MR. AMBASSADOR. THE LAST TIME I VISITED YOUR LAND OF RUDYARDA--
--YOUR GOVERN-MENT JAILED ME FOR MY COLOR!*
*FF#119. --ROY.
YES, AND I SUPPORT MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, PRINCE--THOUGH, OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T HOLD ME RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.
SINCE WE'VE MET AT VARIOUS FUNCTIONS OVER THE YEARS, YOU CAN ATTEST THAT I'VE BEEN HERE IN AMERICA FOR QUITE SOME TIME!
IN ANY EVENT, I NOW FIND MY-SELF IN NEED OF THE AVENGERS.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? DON'T TURN AWAY FROM ME! THE AVENGERS HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC!
WE HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO DO ANYTHING, MR. AMBASSADOR--
--BUT I WON'T DISREGARD YOUR REQUEST.

EVER SINCE I WAS INCARCERATED, I'VE HELD A SPECIAL CONTEMPT FOR THE WHITE SUPREMACISTS OF RUDYARDA--
--AND NOW, THIS PARTICULARLY BIGOTED GENTLEMAN CROSSES MY PATH AGAIN... IN NEED.
FATE PLAYS STRANGE GAMES.
WHAT'S THE BLUE SUMMONS FOR, T'CHALLA? ARE THE FOUR OF US ENOUGH?
THE BIG THREE ARE STILL IN CONFERENCE, YOU KNOW.
ASK HIM--
--MR. RONALD PERSHING, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF RUDYARDA.
HMMM... THE ANDROID! AH WELL...
EACH MEMBER OF MY EMBASSY STAFF HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED A THREAT UPON HIS LIFE--OF DEATH BY SOUND AND FIRE! WE LAUGHED IT OFF, OF COURSE, BUT--
--THIS MORNING, WE FOUND THE GARDENER--BURNED TO A CINDER! WE NEED YOUR SORT OF PROTECTION!
WE SHALL INVESTIGATE, MR. PERSHING.
SO, THEY FINALLY GET INTO THAT CRYSTAL CLEAR DAY--
MY CAR IS RIGHT OVER HERE.
--BUT THE FOLLOWING SECOND--
ZZAAPP
DOST THOU HEAR--?
SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM OUT FRONT!

AND OUT FRONT IS A SIGHT TO SET THE BRAIN TO BOGGLE! AS THOR, IRON MAN, AND CAP BURST FROM THE HOUSE, THEY FIND--
A LOOMING, LAUGHING FIGURE OF HIM THEY KNOW AS KLAW, THE MURDEROUS MASTER OF SOUND!
THE NORMAL-SIZED FIGURE OF SOLARR, WHOSE POWER IS THAT OF THE RAGING SUN!*
AND THEIR FIVE COMRADES, ALONG WITH THE AMBASSADOR--WALLED INSIDE A SOLID SHIELD OF WHAT CAN ONLY BE--
--PURE SOUND!
*HOLD EVERYTHING THERE! YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING HOW THESE TWO VILLAINS--WHO HAVE NEVER MET BEFORE--GOT TOGETHER. WELL, IN ANOTHER MIGHTY MARVEL FIRST, WE'RE GOING TO LET YOU TELL US HOW THEY GOT TOGETHER. THE BEST ANSWER CAN PICK UP A NO-PRIZE IN THE LETTERS PAGE OF AVENGERS #130!

ALMOST WITHOUT THINKING, THE THUNDER GOD HURLS HIS ENCHANTED MALLET AT THE MORE FORMIDABLE FOE--
--BUT--
THIS IS ONLY A TRI-DIMENSIONAL IMAGE, FORMED OF SOUND!
I AM ACTUALLY ELSE-WHERE, THOR!
BUT THROUGH THESE HOSTAGES, MY DEMANDS WILL BE MET JUST AS SURELY!
"TO UNDERSTAND MY DEMANDS, YOU MUST KNOW OF MY TREATMENT AT THE HANDS OF THE RUDYARDANS!* IF YOU THINK THEY TREAT BLACK PEOPLE BADLY--
"--CONSIDER THE PLIGHT OF A MAN WHO IS RED!
*AFTER FF #119. --ROY.
"IN THEIR STINKING JAILS, I VOWED TO ATTACK AND DESTROY THAT KIND OF JUSTICE--"
--BUT I WILL HAVE A DEFENSE FIRST! I WILL ENJOY DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FROM RETALIATION, EXACTLY LIKE DR. DOOM AND THE SUB-MARINER--
--BECAUSE I WILL BE DICTATOR OF WAKANDA!
--OR I'LL UN-LEASH MY KILLING POWER ON YOU HOSTAGES--ONE-BY-ONE!
ABANDON YOUR THRONE, PANTHER, AND NAME MY PARTNER YOUR SUCCESSOR--
YOU MAY REMEMBER MY PREVIOUS APPEARANCE! SOME CALLED ME A PSYCHOTIC ASSASSIN!*
I DIDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT BLASTING THE GARDENER--
*CA & F #160. --ROY.
--AND I WON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT BLASTING YOU!
SSSSSSS
THE AMBASSADOR WAS THE FIRST! IF T'CHALLA DOESN'T AGREE WITHIN ONE HOUR--
ONE OF THE WOMEN WILL BE NEXT!
THE IMAGE FADES!

THIS MAN'S HEARTBEAT IS FAINT BUT STEADY! THE INTENSE HEAT MUST HAVE SEVERELY SHOCKED HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM!
BUT WITHOUT IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION--!
THEN--I'LL HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DARED BEFORE!
IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT--IF I COULD USE MY HEX POWER TO REVERSE PROBABILITY AROUND MR. PERSHING--
--I COULD REVIVE HIM!
STRANGE IS THIS MUTANT ABILITY OF THE SCARLET WITCH--STRANGE AND NOT A LITTLE UNPREDICTABLE! ALL SHE CAN BE CERTAIN OF, WHEN SHE JOINS HER HANDS TOGETHER--
--IS THAT SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN.
THE REST IS UP TO HER STRENGTH OF WILL--AND LUCK!
AND LUCK IS A LADY TODAY!
WHA--? THE PAIN--IT'S GONE! THE YOUNG WOMAN SAVED MY LIFE!
WANDA! THAT WAS AMAZING!
YOU KNOW, I EVEN SURPRISED MYSELF, T'CHALLA--
--BUT I THINK I'M FINALLY GAINING SOME CONTROL OVER MY POWER!
AND I WISH WE HAD TIME TO APPRECIATE IT, WANDA--
"--BUT NOW WE HAVE TO BREAK THAT SOUND-BARRIER BEFORE SOLARR BLASTS SOMEONE ELSE!"
FOOLS! KLAW SOLIDIFIED A SOUND WHICH PERMITS THE THE PASSAGE OF MY SUN-BURSTS ALONE!
BLOK!
FWAM!
BAZZ!
NOT EVEN THE VISION'S SOLAR BEAMS CAN PENETRATE THE SHIELD--
--AND CERTAINLY NOT HE HIMSELF--A-HA! VERY GOOD!
BUT IF YOU DIG BENEATH THE BUBBLE, IT WILL ONLY SETTLE!
KLAW COVERED ALL THE ANGLES!


STILL, SOLARR, DISRUPTING FORCE FIELDS HAS BECOME ALMOST A HABIT FOR ME LATELY!
NO, WANDA! TO ATTEMPT THIS IS USELESS!
THIS ONE CAN SENSE IT!
ATTEMPTING TO PSYCHE ME IS EQUALLY USELESS, MANTIS--
BLAST! THE FIELD DIDN'T SHATTER!
COMPLETE CONTROL OF YOUR POWER IS YET IN THE FUTURE, WANDA. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE RESTED LONGER.
CALL IT HOURS OF PENT-UP FRUSTRATION. CALL IT THE SUDDEN PLUNGE FROM HOPED FOR SUCCESS TO HUMILIATING FAILURE. WHATEVER IT IS...
...IT'S LOUD!
THAT'S RIGHT! STAND UP FOR MANTIS!
ONLY TALK TO ME WHEN I'M WRONG!
MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL IT... THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY ARE TRULY TRAPPED!
BLACK PANTHER, I'VE HAD MY LIFE SAVED FROM THESE VILLAINS ONCE.
IF I FACE DEATH AGAIN, IT WILL BE ON YOUR HEAD!
YOU CAN SAVE US ALL WITH A WORD--
--BY SIMPLY SURRENDERING YOUR THRONE!
NO! THAT'S THE ONE SOLUTION I'LL NEVER ACCEPT!
IRON MAN!
WHAT, T'CHALLA?
FROM MY PAST EXPERIENCE WITH KLAW, I'D SAY HE'D HAVE TO BE WITHIN A TWENTY-BLOCK RADIUS TO CONTROL HIS SOLIDIFIED SOUND AS WELL AS HE HAS.
DOES TONY STARK--
--HAVE SOMETHING TO FIND HIS LAIR? YOU BET HE DOES!
COME ON, YOU TWO! WE'VE GOT LESS THAN ONE HOUR TO GET AUDIO-ANALECTS FROM THE LONG ISLAND PLANT-- GET BACK HERE-- AND SEARCH THAT AREA!
I'LL RACE YOU, THOR!
GIVE ME A LIFT, AVENGER! I'M RIGHT WITH YOU!
PROVIDENCE FLY WITH YOU, MY FRIENDS! WE HAVE NO NEED FOR HER HERE.
WITHIN THIS BUBBLE, ONLY FATE COMMANDS, AND I BELIEVE THE DRAMA IS ALL PRE-ORDAINED! I WONDERED IF PERSHING'S APPEARANCE WERE AN OMEN--
--AND IT HAS CERTAINLY PROVED TO BE SO.'
BUT WHETHER IT'S AN OMEN OF MY LIFE OR MY DEATH IS YET TO BE KNOWN--
--AND IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE OUTCOME OF THEIR HUNT FOR KLAW!

BARELY TWENTY-SIX MINUTES REMAIN IN THE HOUR WHEN THE HUNTERS RETURN--
--STREAKING DOWN THE CONCRETE CANYONS OF MANHATTAN WITH THEIR WEIRD-LOOKING WEAPONS.
NOT FOR NOTHING IS TONY STARK CALLED AN ELECTRONICS GENIUS!
GN
HIS AUDIO-ANALECT, SET TO PROBE FOR THE SAME SUB-SOUND AS HUMS THROUGH THE BUBBLE--
--WILL PINPOINT ANY OTHER SOURCE OF THAT SOUND, WHEREVER IT MAY BE IN NOISE-WRACKED NEW YORK!
EIGHTEEN MINUTES LEFT.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING, PEOPLE! JUST OFF FIRST AVENUE, NEAR THE U.N.!
FOURTEEN MINUTES.
THIRTEEN.
SO LITTLE TIME-- BUT WE CAN'T FAIL...
...BECAUSE THIS UNEXPECTED EMERGENCY WILL PROBABLY BE--
--CAPTAIN AMERICA'S FINAL BATTLE!
TWELVE.
EMPTY! THIS CHAMBER HATH BEEN LONG DESERTED!
BUT I GOT A READING!
MAYBE YOU WERE TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH YOUR OTHER THOUGHTS, CAP.
NO, I'M--
GOOD LORD!
PANTHERS-- SPRINGING FROM OUT OF THE WALL!

SOUND! IN OUR LAST ISSUE, TOO MANY KINDS OF IT BROUGHT DISASTER IN DEEP SPACE TO EARTH'S ENEMIES!
NOW HERE IS YET ANOTHER KIND:
WAM!
SOLIDIFIED SOUND! MOVING, MURDEROUS, WALL-SMASHING SOUND!
A WELL-LAID, WELL-SPRUNG TRAP FOR THE AVENGERS!
BUT OVER THE YEARS, MONTH IN AND MONTH OUT, THE AVENGERS HAVE RUN UP AGAINST VERY FEW TRAPS THAT COULD HOLD THEM--
--AND NONE THAT COULD HOLD THEM FOR LONG!
KRAK!
WITH NO WASTED EFFORT, MOVING SMOOTHLY AS A TEAM--
--THESE MEN TAKE ON THESE GHOULISH BEASTS--
TOK!
--AND TAKE THEM OUT!

THAT'S WHY THEY'RE CALLED EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, IRON MAN? DO YOU STILL THINK I'D LET MY PERSONAL PROBLEMS DISTRACT ME IN A CRISIS?
I NEVER REALLY DID, CAP. BUT I DO THINK THIS--
--OUR PAL KLAW LEFT HIS PUSSY-CATS TO DISCOURAGE ANYONE LOOKING FOR HIS HIDING PLACE--
NINE MINUTES LEFT.
ASTOUNDING! SO SOLID IS THIS FORMED SOUND KLAW CONTROLS--
--THAT IT MAY BE BROKEN! VERILY, HIS POWER IS FORMIDABLE, AVENGERS!
"--BUT HE'S LONG, LONG GONE!"
WE HAVE NINE MINUTES--NINE MINUTES UNTIL THAT MANIAC, SOLARR, KILLS ONE OF THE WOMEN--
--AND YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE AN ENCOURAGING WORD TO GIVE US!
LISTEN, YOU OTHERS--WHETHER YOU HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROTECT ME OR NOT--
--YOU SURELY CAN'T LET US DIE ON THE WHIM OF A BLACK MAN!
MR. AMBASSADOR--THE AVENGERS WILL DO THEIR UTMOST TO SAFE-GUARD YOUR LIFE--
--ALL THE AVENGERS!
NOW, PLEASE--STOP RAVING!
WANDA, I MUST SPEAK WITH T'CHALLA. HE SHOULDN'T TAKE THIS BURDEN ALL TO HIMSELF.
ON THE OTHER HAND, VISION--MAYBE YOU AND I SHOULD TALK!

THERE'S A CHANCE I'LL DIE IN EIGHT MINUTES!
AND I DON'T WANT TO FACE THAT WITHOUT KNOWING ABOUT YOU AND HER!
THERE IS NOTHING TO KNOW. I WAS AS AMAZED AS YOU AT THE SWORDSMAN'S OUTBURST DURING THE THANOS-WAR.*
I AM AMAZED AT YOUR OUTBURST NOW.
*LAST ISH. --ROY.
OH YES! YOU'RE SO COOL-- SO COLLECTED! BUT YOU DO FEEL EMOTIONS-- YOU'VE FELT THEM WITH ME-- SO WHY NOT AGAIN, WITH MANTIS?
ISN'T SHE YOUR TYPE?
WANDA, EMOTION IS STILL A RARE THING FOR ME, AND LOVE THE RAREST OF ALL. I HAVE HARDLY EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO "TYPE" WOMEN.
BUT MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO! THAT IS SOMETHING HUMAN MALES DO--
--AND YOU DO WISH YOU WERE HUMAN!
I--
OBVIOUSLY, YOU'RE IN NO MOOD TO LISTEN, BUT ONLY TO TALK.
LET'S POSTPONE THIS DISCUSSION UNTIL THAT MOOD PASSES.
JUST THEN, FORTUNATELY--
ALAS, AVENGERS, WE BRING BAD TIDINGS!
NOWHERE WITHIN THE DESIGNATED RADIUS HAVE WE DISCOVERED OUR FOE!
BUT THAT CAN'T BE! I WAS SO CERTAIN!
HE HAS TO BE NEARBY! HE HAS--
--TO--
--BE--

--YOU, "MR. AMBASSADOR"!
WHAT--WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU WAKANDAN SAVAGE?
YOU NO LONGER NEED YOUR POSE AS THE MAN I KNOW, KLAW--
YOU NO LONGER NEED THIS FALSE HAND--
--WHICH NEVER DROPPED YOUR BRIEFCASE, EVEN WHILE YOU WERE "INJURED"--
--BUT WHICH MADE SUCH A GOOD DISGUISE FOR YOUR SONIC HORN!
A HORN YOU FORCED UPON ME, PANTHER, AFTER YOU DESTROYED MY REAL RIGHT HAND--
--AND THAT IS THE REASON I CHOSE YOUR KINGDOM AS THE BASE FOR MY REVENGE UPON RUDYARDA! I CALL THAT SIMPLE JUSTICE!
HIS DISGUISE--VANISHING! IT MUST ALSO HAVE BEEN SOUND!
I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO UNMASK ME, ESPECIALLY AFTER SOLARR PRETENDED TO ASSAULT ME--
--BUT EVEN UNMASKED, I WILL STILL REMOVE YOU FROM YOUR THRONE--

--THROUGH DEATH!
NO, KLAW! NEVER!
FOOM!
YOU CAN'T AVOID BOTH OF OUR BLASTS, BIG SHOT!
SHOG!
MOST MEN COULDN'T--
ZOT!
WUM!
BUT MOST MEN ARE NOT THE BLACK PANTHER!
SOCKO!
NOW, KLAW, IF YOU DON'T MIND--
--I'LL TEST MY THEORY THAT YOUR "BRIEFCASE" IS ACTUALLY YOUR HIDDEN POWER SOURCE!
ZAKL!
AND SINCE IT IS--
--ALL SOLIDIFIED SOUND IMMEDIATELY EVAPORATES--
--AND SOLARR IS LEFT STANDING IN MIDAIR-- UNTIL HE FALLS!

THUS, THE FATE OF ALL VILLAINS.
HOW CAMEST THOU TO THE SOLUTION, T'CHALLA?
WELL, I KNOW RUDYARDANS DON'T LIKE WAKANDANS, BUT "THE AMBASSADOR" WAS OVER-PLAYING HIS ROLE.
HE MADE TOO MUCH OF NOT SHAKING MY HAND--
--AND I WONDERED THEN IF IT WASN'T ACTUALLY BECAUSE HE WANTED TO KEEP A GRIP ON HIS BRIEF-CASE.
FINALLY, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT IF YOU COULDN'T FIND KLAW, HE HAD TO BE IN THE ONE PLACE YOU DIDN'T SEARCH.
BUT MOST OF ALL--
--AN HOUR AGO, I WAS THINKING ABOUT RETURNING HOME, AND THIS MAN CAME TO ME AND INSULTED THAT HOME!
I FELT IT HAD TO BE AN OMEN--
--AND IT WAS!
AVENGERS, I VALUE MY LAND AND MY PEOPLE ABOVE ALL ELSE! I HATE ALL EVIL, BUT WITH THE DANGERS WAKANDA NOW FACES...
I MUST REQUEST A LEAVE OF ABSENCE.
GRANTED!
THOU HAST SERVED THE CAUSE AND NAME OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS WITH DISTINCTION, BLACK PANTHER...
COME--WE SHALL DRINK A TOAST TO THY FUTURE GLORIES!
THE BLACK PANTHER...
WE'VE SERVED WITH HIM FOR YEARS-- YET NONE OF US CAN SAY HE TRULY KNOWS HIM. T'CHALLA IS A BREED APART... A MAN OF PRIDE AND MYSTERY!
STILL, EVER SINCE I FIRST MET HIM, I'VE FELT A CERTAIN BOND OF KINSHIP... AND NEVER MORE SO THAN NOW--
--FOR, JUST AS HE IS LEAVING THE AVENGERS--
--SO, TOO, MUST I!
TO SEE EXACTLY WHAT CAP MEANS, DON'T MISS CA&F #176, ON SALE NOW! IT'LL ROCK YA!
NEXT ISSUE: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS JOIN THE FABULOUS F.F. IN THE LAND OF THE INHUMANS FOR-- THE WEDDING THAT WASN'T!

PANTHER'S CHRONICLES

BY DON McGREGOR

The amazing thing is that these comics you hold in your hands exist at all.

Good, bad, or indifferent, in the 1970s, when these were originally written and drawn, there was only a short time frame between 1973 and 1976 where there was a tiny gap at Marvel Comics where this kind of book, and a few others, could become a reality.

In the early '70s, the Marvel Comics Universe was expanding rapidly. New titles were continually being added to the line. It is almost a rule in this industry that there are always too few people to truly oversee the production of all the books a company puts out. By 1973, new people were being added to the staff, as not only new monthly and bi-monthly comics were being added, but Marvel was exploding into the black-and-white comics magazine market, as well.

By 1977, it is my sincere belief that you would never be holding this book in your hands. These stories would have been weeded out and never allowed to grow.

It was a different time, the early '70s, and what many people take for granted now in storytelling media—and especially what can or can't be in comics—then was *verboten*. Writing about race, or sexual preferences other than heterosexual were virtually nil. In the world of comics these and other topics were considered a taboo.

Many of the rules in comics are unwritten, but get inside the conclave, and they are there, some insidiously, some absurd, some shrewd. But the rules are there, and it didn't take long for me to begin to realize they shaped what I could do as a storyteller.

In 1972 I had been hired to work on staff as a proofreader. I came from Rhode Island, and I'd been telling and writing stories and loving comics as long back as I have active memory.

I have read that I was saved from life as a security guard when I was offered the job at Marvel Comics. I did work as a security guard. I also worked for my grandfather's company, which printed, among other things, the patches the astronauts wore on their flights to the moon.

I had worked in a bank, for a while, where I observed the offices and class structure of power and money. I worked at the Providence *Journal*, and reviewed books of authors like Evan Hunter, whom I loved dearly, and who influenced me greatly as a writer.

I worked at a movie theater where I got to view all the parts of unrated films before they were shown to Rhode Island's appointed "civics committee" that would decide what could be seen and not seen in the State. You didn't have to accede to their dictates, they couldn't force you; but when license renewal time came around you might find it hard to get it renewed. Should have prepared me for the travel to New York and the world of comics, but somehow I guess I believed all the Bullpen Bulletin pages, and that this place of writers and artists would be different.

I worked for the National Guard in the Military Police in a time when riots exploded in this country. I could have retired at 45, full medical benefits, and a government retirement program. Except you can get court martialed for telling a lieutenant, "I'm tired of being subservient to mental incompetence," saluting, and doing an about face out of his office.

I write about these jobs, and the fact that when the offer came to work at Marvel Comics I was living in a three bedroom house, with a fireplace, with a garage, with a bay window view of a pond with lily pads, within three walking blocks of a private stretch of Atlantic Ocean beach.

I had my daughter, Lauren, who was about three years old at the time.

I walked away from it all for a $125.00 a week job at Marvel Comics.

I did that. No one "saved" me from a life as a security guard. I'm just setting the record straight here. I could have simply stayed within that safe place, writing for Warren Magazines, trekking around New York City to magazines like *Mike Shayne*, *Mystery Magazine*, and others, trying to sell my short stories.

I'd already proven I was a writer. I didn't need validation.

I came to Marvel Comics because I loved Marvel Comics. As the line burgeoned, one of my jobs was to read all the reprint titles. One of the titles was *Jungle Action*, a collection of jungle genre comics from the 1950s, mostly detailing white men and women saving Africans or being threatened by them.

I voiced a lament that I thought it was a shame that in 1973 Marvel was printing these stories, and couldn't we have a black African hero. I was not thinking of the Black Panther, and it was really a lament, because I was in no position to change anything.

Sometime later, during an editorial meeting, it was announced that several of the reprint titles would feature new material. Now, it was one of those unwritten rules that if you worked in editorial you would be given things to write, to supplement that $125.00 a week. It was at such a meeting that I learned I would be given Killraven (in *Amazing Adventures*) and *Jungle Action*, with the Black Panther in Wakanda, to write.

Thus began a profound three years, both professionally and personally, one of intense gratification as a storyteller, but also continual anxiety. It was an intense time; it was an exciting time. It was a time of fulfillment, it was a time of frustration. It was a time when the storyteller in me was challenged, again and again, and I learned, then, that a writer doesn't just have to make a decision of what kind of writer he/she will be, they will have to make that decision time after time, until their last story is written.

Jim Salicrup kindly lent me all the comics that featured the Black Panther, because mine were still back in Rhode Island, I guess. In those days, you could read every book with a character before starting to write a series. It would become part of what I would try to do. Learn what I liked, and learn what I didn't, and see what I could bring to a character, without violating its own mythos.

I immediately felt that the stories had to be about Wakandans, that already the Black Panther character had been compromised. Why would an African chieftain decide to be a school teacher in Harlem? And leave his people adrift, without leadership?

I also realized that Wakanda was a concept, but that detailing how the country worked had never been explored. On top of that, it would make me shake my head at how many white villains managed to locate this super secret society.

That meant, if the stories were situated in Wakanda, all the major characters would have to be Wakandan. And that meant all of the characters save one would be black. That was a decision that would cause me conflict during the unfolding of "Panther's Rage." An all-black cast in a comic book, from a major company, at that time? Wasn't happening.

Believe me, no one in the editorial hallowed halls was applauding this approach. In fact, I can't recall a single, encouraging word from editorial during the entire run of the series.

I realize now that it is part of who I am as a writer, but once undertaking a series, I was already concerned about what I would write about after "Panther's Rage." Before I'd written a single page, I had decided these should be done as big visual stories, and that when this storyline ended I would set the second in South Africa, with the Panther searching for his mother, and deal with the oppression of Apartheid.

I didn't know it at the time, but I had been given these two titles to write, because they were expected to die.

DC had trouble selling Tarzan by Joe Kubert, and jungle strips weren't considered big sellers in comics. I think there were high expectations for Killraven, but when there were three different writers and three different artists for the first three issues before I took over, it was seen as a death-knell for the series.

No one, including me, expected the reaction from the readers, from the fans, for these books, and they were

invaluable voices for me in the maelstrom about them. I often wished some of the letter writers were in editorial (in time they would be), where I often felt isolated, and knew it was unwise to reveal anything you wanted to do as a storyteller. If you were told, "No," and you did it anyway, then you had committed an open act of defiance.

I learned, some time after these books were published, that what I hadn't been told was I'd been given the chance to write, and the books had failed, but that I could still stay on staff. When I learned this, in some darkened hours of late night, I found I could still be moved to tears at how manipulative so much of it was. I was learning about one-eyed jacks.

The reason people did not mind me on staff wasn't because I was particularly good at it, but I had no agenda to become editor-in-chief, or if I did, I was going about it in the most incomprehensible manner ever.

On the other hand, from the get-go, with the comics, I was lucky, because I met some terrific artists, who became friends, and more than that, allies, and beyond that, took all that anguish and determination I had as a writer and brought the stories visually to life. Only because Rich Buckler wanted to do the Panther and had believed in what I wanted to do, did he draw the first three chapters of "Panther's Rage." If Rich hadn't insisted they let him draw it, the title wasn't important enough, it wouldn't have an artist of his stature on it.

The only people I ever spoke to about these stories were the artists. They were the only ones who were in on what I hoped to do. Speak to other writers, they'd either want to tell you how to do it, or it would get to people who would say "No."

I knew right out of the gate that "Panther's Rage" would be like a chapter serial. You can see that approach in the first issue. T'Challa is actually thrown off a cliff. One of the edicts I am glad came down was that they didn't want only cliffhangers, which allowed each chapter to become a component of the whole.

I never told anyone but Rich that the entire series would be titled "Panther's Rage." If I had, I truly suspect it would not have been allowed. What I did was, I had the title logo photostatted, and when the finished art came in for the next chapter, I would shoot the logo down and paste it on the first page. Since *Jungle Action* was a low-priority book, it was seldom read until after it saw publication, and that's how the "Panther's Rage" came to be.

Originally, I know I recall this accurately, I had "Rage" planned for ten chapters. I'm not sure why, since I loved the old Republic serials, and traditionally they were comprised of twelve to thirteen chapters, which is what "Panther's Rage" did end up being. The series lengthened during the trek started in *Jungle Action* #12. I realized that I could not encompass all the locales and thematic elements that I wanted to explore in the series during the writing of those issues.

Rich Buckler helped me find a place to live in the Bronx, near where he lived. At night, I would go to Rich's place, and I would stand in Panther poses, while he drew. We designed pages together.

In *Jungle Action* #8, I wrote my first scene with Taku and Venomm, the first characters I ever wrote who were gay. I could not bring these characters out of the closet at the time. It is not enough for a writer to want to do something in this medium. You have to find a way that it can become a paper reality, held in hands, seen by eyes, read and experienced. I was already under the gun with the interracial aspect of Killraven, and the all-black cast in *Jungle Action*. If it had come out at that time that Taku and Venomm were homosexual, I have no doubt that when I was called into the inner sanctums that time, it could quite possibly be the last time I was called.

It wouldn't be until 1978, and *Detectives Inc.*, that I would find someone who would represent all kinds of people in comics. That was Eclipse's Dean Mullaney, and because of him, I was able to include gays in comics, outright, for the first time.

I had no political agenda in this, merely a human one. It always puzzled me that if the bottom color in comics was supposed to be green, why was there such abhorrence of diversity?

Jungle Action #8 was Rich's last Panther for a long while. The title page "Malice By Crimson Moonlight" was directly inspired by Steranko's *S.H.I.E.L.D.* double-page title spread for "Dark Moon Rise, Hell Hound Kill." We didn't do it as good.

In that issue I also did something crazy, but that I had to do if I wanted a book that wouldn't make me wince. I determined that I couldn't live with a five-page reprint in the back of the book. It would always be there, taunting me, stabbing me. I had to find a way that would make it so that the reprint stories wouldn't have to be used, but it couldn't cost the company money. With the help of friends like Alex Simmons, Jim Salicrup and Rich, I came up with ways to do back-up features—maps, pinups, story recaps. I know Alex worked on the finished drawings for T'Challa's Wakandan Palace, and was glad we could incorporate a toilet in the place. You take your victories where you can get them.

Doing these features would cause some hostility with some of the other writers. I could never have foreseen this. I was confronted, after working hours, by several irate writers. The consensus was that I was making them look bad. I was giving the company work for free. I understood their position. I also understood that I had to live with these books. I was giving everything I had to create them. I just wanted a book I didn't have to cringe every time I looked at it.

I did the backups for the readers. And me. And those outdated stories didn't have to be a part of *Jungle Action*.

I have no idea how Gil Kane came to draw *Jungle Action* #9. If some writers were angling to get off series when they felt sales figures were going down so some other writer would be on the title and get the blame, it makes my eyebrows rise that Gil was given "But Now The Spears Are Broken," on a book that was really still low priority, on which the fan mail was just beginning to increase and become more and more personal and analytical.

I do know that Danny Crespi, bless him, did the title page logo. He told me to tuck the art in the stack of production work he had and he would get to it. Danny was head of production then, and I think he and John Verpoorten took me under their wing, perhaps suspecting this place was going to swallow me up. I thank both of them for their kindness to me, when there were times I felt so isolated, in a place where I wanted to belong.

Issue #9's sequence where Zatama is murdered almost killed me as a writer.

Since I worked during the day on staff, I wrote the books at night. I don't know how many nights I worked on that scene. I hated everything that I wrote. It all sounded so trite. Each version seemed like I'd read it before. It was one of those times that made me hold my head so it wouldn't splatter and make me wonder what made me think I could be a writer.

Eventually, I settled for a caption from one draft, one from another, until it was something I could live with. I knew I had to get past the page. I feel, in looking back on it, that I wanted too much to come from Zatama's death, and I had not earned it as a writer.

But this is another thing the storyteller learns, that everyone reacts differently, and a couple of decades later, Jon Cooke, of *Comic Book Artist* magazine, would talk to me about how this page affected him. And I told him how it almost broke me as a writer.

So go figure.

My artistic luck held with *Jungle Action* #10. My old friend Billy Graham became the artist. Now I had an ally on both titles I was writing. Craig Russell on Killraven, Billy Graham on the Panther. Billy often gave me a place to stay when I was first trying to sell my stories in New York City. When the Billy Graham drawn *Sabre* run is finally collected I'll write about our many adventures during that time. Billy was one of the few truly Renaissance people I have ever met. He was effervescent, although that was often his word for me. I remember the momentous, dramatic first time we met; and I recall the last words we ever spoke together.

With Billy on "Panther's Rage" I could try any visual layout I wanted. Billy had no problem with it, and encouraged me to do so. Klaus Janson continued to ink the book; Glynis Oliver was coloring the book, and I lucked out there, too, because if Glynis hadn't wanted to do the book, her talent would have been considered wasted on "Panther's Rage." Glynis didn't stay on the book because of me, although we always got along

famously, but because the Wakandan locale was so different from much of what she had to color, which was primarily New York City.

I had definite ideas about the color in "Panther's Rage." The moon was not supposed to ever be a pale yellow. There was always a Frank Frazetta moon in the sky, as I would tell Billy and Glynis. And the ambiance of Wakanda should always show. It was distinct, magical reality. There were certain kinds of blues that I felt were perfect for the Panther, and others that would dull his figure in night, so lighting on him was always of key import to me. And Billy and Glynis got it.

In *Jungle Action* #11, I had a sequence where I wanted the panels to fade out into the past, and later to fade in back to the present. When you're dealing with a complex visual like that, you have to confer with everybody at their separate phase of the book, so they know what it is you are trying to pull off, and what they need to do to make it work.

I took a lot of extra time working on that sequence, but this brings up a catch-22. How much time does the creative person devote to the work? A writer gets paid the same amount of money for spending ten minutes on a page or spending two days.

I was never as lucky with lettering as I was with art and coloring. But I understand that this was a low priority book. If I were a letterer and I had a book that paid a certain amount of money for two words or 22 words, or six balloons vs. thirteen balloons, I can understand why a letterer would say, "Keep me away from Don!"

This brings me to another aspect that I had to think about right from the beginning. These were bi-monthly books. If I wrote Taku or W'Kabi out for a single issue, for instance, that meant that the readers did not see that character for four months. If I omitted one of them for two issues there would be half a year that the audience didn't see those characters. A half a year is a long time to ask the reader to have any kind of emotional commitment to the character.

That was always a factor. I had thirteen pages in the beginning. How do you get the characters in there, have a scene that is theirs? How do you reintroduce that character in the new chapter so it isn't something the devoted followers have read before, yet make it so new readers know who they are with.

I had to face that question each issue.

The upside to creating your own supporting cast was that you could more or less do things with them without having to ask permission. If you wanted the Panther and Monica to marry, you'd have to get a committee to agree that such a thing could happen. If W'Kabi lost an arm, that was considered your character, and you didn't have to consult to do it. Another unwritten rule to be learned at that time.

The fan mail was increasing. It was very exciting and again, intense. People were evaluating the books, relating to them. A storyteller can't ask for more than that.

I sometimes felt I was climbing a steep mountain. The more acclaim the books would get, the more rewarding the efforts. Yet, there was a part of me that feared that with the next book, that would be it, I would have stepped off the edge of the mountain, to plummet into the abyss.

The reactions from some other writers in the business were bizarre. "How come I don't get letters like this?" How the hell would I know? I don't write the letters. Others said, "Too many type-written letters, means your books are going to die!"

The books that were believed to be dead, and somehow were still surviving.

The letter writers gave me hope when I was back in the lonely hours writing the books.

Of course, you may think you know what people are going to get from a story, but during the course of creating these books, one of the other things I learned is, you can never tell what someone will get from a story.

In "The God Killer" I was sure it examined the nature of religious belief, and that we all have a potential to be the God Killer of what we learned in our youth, or that we sustain that belief and become committed to it. We received one letter threatening to bomb the Marvel Comics offices because this anonymous reader believed I was advocating that all black people kill all whites!

Whoa!

I played with something besides the Panther in issue #13. For the first year of the series we always saw W'Kabi as T'Challa's counselor of war, and in that context of W'Kabi's playing devil's advocate to T'Challa. In comics, often readers perceive what a character's purpose is in the series. We had never seen W'Kabi outside of his work; in this issue I introduced his wife, Chandra, and the domestic turbulence in their home, and its affect on their kids.

Readers responded. Interviewers would ask many questions about it. People began to see W'Kabi in a new way, and would have to re-examine who he was. Kind of like real life.

I would return to this theme later in *Detectives Inc: A Terror of Dying Dreams*, and it would help inspire Malcolm Deeley to publish a book titled *Poets Against Abuse*, to help raise money for victims of domestic violence.

Gil Kane penciled all the series' dinosaur covers. I was told that was because Gil liked to draw dinosaurs. Everybody has their own thing.

In the original coloring for *Jungle Action* #15, when I saw Billy's art, I thought the panels where T'Challa was tied to the cactus were strips of his outfit over his shoulders. Glynis colored it as blood, and I thought, that makes it more real. But someone complained in the Bullpen that we were doing "comics for sailors," whatever that meant, and people were suddenly offended.

Now, along the way, issue after issue, editorial wanted to know where the white people were. Always, "Where are the white people?" And my response was, "This is a hidden, technologically advanced African nation. Where are the white people supposed to come from?!"

They wanted the Avengers in there. They wanted white people helping the black people out. I'm sure part of their reasoning was, if you guest-star the established white characters, you have bigger sales. I have no idea if that is true. Maybe. Maybe not. But here's the thing, we were doing something unheard of in comics, and the books hadn't died, as predicted, they were still limping along, or however they were selling. And maybe, just maybe, we were giving something to some people somewhere. I felt there could be something of importance about this.

It was my decision. I did not want the black hero to have to rely on white heroes to save the day for him. I stood firm on it, then. I stand firm on it now.

I did not foresee the reaction, though, when Kantu comes to T'Challa's aid, and kills his father's murderer. To me, T'Challa had won the important fights we all face as individuals, and there was triumph for both him and Kantu. But damn, was there agitation at this unrevealed final moment!

As I wrote earlier, this was a tumultuous time for me, professionally and personally. I often felt as if I were in that old circus act, the one where the performer spins plates on top of tall sticks. I felt I'd spin one plate, the writing, spin another, my marriage, the editorial job, another; but whatever plates weren't being spun were wobbling.

I quit the editorial job toward the end of "Panther's Rage." Now, here's the upside of being on staff. You can always be around, and it's hard for people to screw around with your books without you trying to save them somehow. If you're not there, anything can happen.

But my life was coming apart, and I knew I couldn't keep this pace going, so I thought I could save my marriage and quit. It didn't help.

I also knew I could not write about South Africa and Apartheid at that time. It would require too much research, and I was already overextended, physically and emotionally. I decided to write The Panther vs. The Klan instead. It was America's bicentennial, and I would joke that it was my birthday gift.

And there was an uproar about the Klan.

My response was, "Hey, you wanted white people, I gave you white people. There's no satisfying you folks."

Billy called and asked me if I really wanted to do this. "They aren't going to come get me up in Harlem, Don."

I said to Billy, "Oh, come on, Billy. They can take a joke, can't they?"

"No," Billy replied, "they can't, Don."

I could not oversee that series the way I had "Panther's Rage." My marriage ended. I was going to court to make sure I got to see my daughter, Lauren. The day I moved out of the house, I came back to my apartment only to hear the phone ringing. It was my ex-wife telling me I had to head up to Rhode Island, that my dad had had a heart attack and they didn't know if he was going to make it through the next day.

I write about this, because as the books are being produced, all of your life is being affected. I had always seen "The Panther vs. The Klan" story as being about separatist groups. Not just the Klan. But what I saw happening in America, the groups who felt their way was the only way, the only right way, and that the violence they used against other people was justified. I always intended to bring other characters like Wind Eagle and the Soul Strangler into the mix.

I think the separatist theme is only intensified, and more valid these days.

To my recollection, in the color comics, the only time I came into conflict with the Comics Code Authority was on issue #21's Panther burning on the cross cover. They claimed that the cover was sacrilegious and showcased torture and bondage. All true. And all valid for a writer to examine.

Originally, T'Challa was tied back on the cross, and as penciled by Rich Buckler, it captured the pain and horror of the moment. It was moving. It was startling. The cover that was published has super hero drama, but destroys everything I tried to build up within the first pages of "A Cross Burning Darkly, Blackening The Night."

I loved the opening line, and still do. "This is not a symbolic Christ figure."

There was only so much of this type of thing being done in comics in those days. I wanted the hurt and loss of human life caught. Some folks think being a writer is glamorous. Certainly not the days you spend trying to experience burning, or being tear gassed, or... well, you get the idea. It's long and it's painful. I think a lot of people cared about T'Challa, and the cruelty and inhumane treatment to someone they cared about would have a visceral impact that would stay long after they'd put the comic down.

Now, some will claim that my writing about the Klan killed the series. That sales then dropped. That may be the case.

But I would like to offer one different approach that could have been tried, and may have worked or may not have worked. If the people hadn't been so afraid of the subject matter, so hostile to my doing it, if those in charge had gone to the outside media and made them aware of what comics were now handling in terms of subject matter, maybe it would have helped sales.

When I was writing "Panther's Quest" in 1989, Jim Salicrup suggested we go down to the promotion people. Jim had no stake in this. It wasn't a book he was editing. He just knew that Nelson Mandela was in New York, and maybe promotion could get a column in the news about Marvel doing a series on South Africa and Apartheid. The woman was needlessly scornful to Jim. There were only certain ways to promote comics. She wanted me to go to a signing that was happening that day, on a book I had nothing to with, and take time away from the creators who were there promoting their book, a book I knew nothing about. That's what she knew how to do, and she didn't want to have to explore a new way of promotion.

I'm just saying, maybe if the Klan storyline had been embraced rather than feared, maybe the ending wouldn't have been the same.

Or maybe it would.

When I was taken off the Panther, I was told it was because I was too close to the black experience.

I looked at my white hands.

Later, someone said that the editor was just treating me like a jilted girlfriend, and that "Mr. Sincerity," me, wanted to believe it. I don't know how this person knows the conversation took place, because there was just the two of us present when it occurred.

However, I knew the books were gone. And it was in a time when I was fighting to see my daughter, going to court, facing things I never knew I'd have to face. A lot of that is a gray time for me. Living in Rhode Island, in that house? I scarcely recalled what daily life was like then. The time period during the divorce and the comics' cancellation are fog enshrouded. I suspect my friends recall them more vividly than I do.

And T'Challa was gone. At the time, I thought forever.

I was wrong. The Panther would come back into my life. In the '80s. But that's another story. There's always another story. Hopefully one you'll see in a volume like this.

Be kind to each other. Be kind to yourselves. And hang in there!

2010

DEDICATION:

This is for my Grandson,

NIKOLAS MOURITZEN

Whose Mommy was only around three to five years old when these books were written.

I rocked him in one arm for nights when he was two weeks old, which he will never remember, until my arm ached from the elbow down.

And he'll probably never recall the affectionate nicknames, Nick-At-Night and Red Alert Nick.

But he might recall learning to swim up in that special lake my daughter and all our family love.
And in some later year, he might enjoy having this book dedicated to him.

And for
My Granddaughter,

MIA ISABELLA McGREGOR

Who is only one but already loves to grab books and look at pictures with her large, beautiful eyes that capture the heart and bring smiles to faces and that hopefully, sometimes, when she is older, this book will bring a smile to her face, and maybe she'll have some small remembrance of pointing at me and saying, "Baby! Baby!" and me asking her, "Who's the baby? You? Or me?"

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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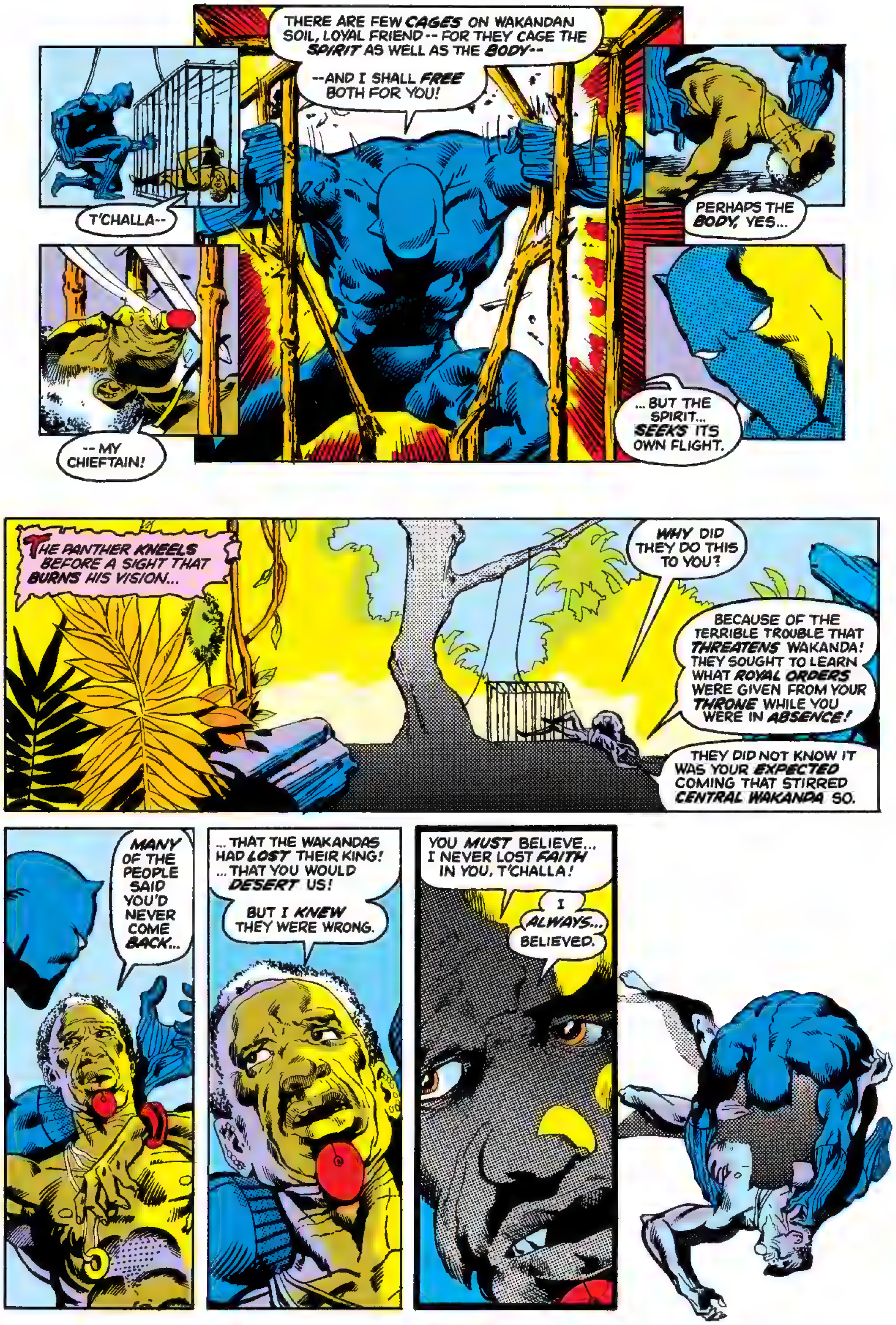
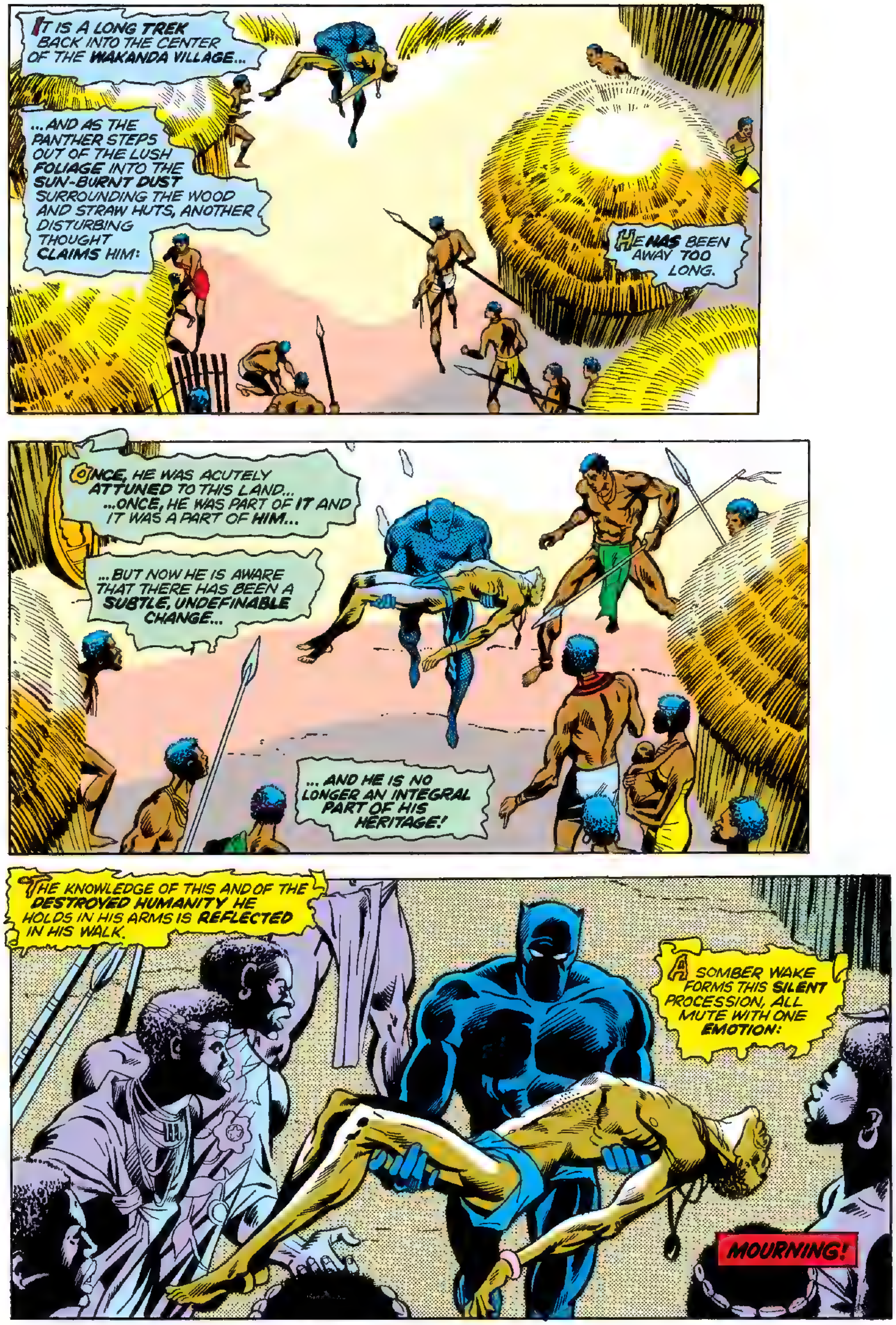
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
YOU'RE FINISHED IN THIS JUNGLE, AVENGER!
BUCKLER & GIACOIA
TOMORROW'S SUN WILL RISE ON A NEW KING OF THE WAKANDAS!
ME!
THE MAN CALLED KILL-MONGER!

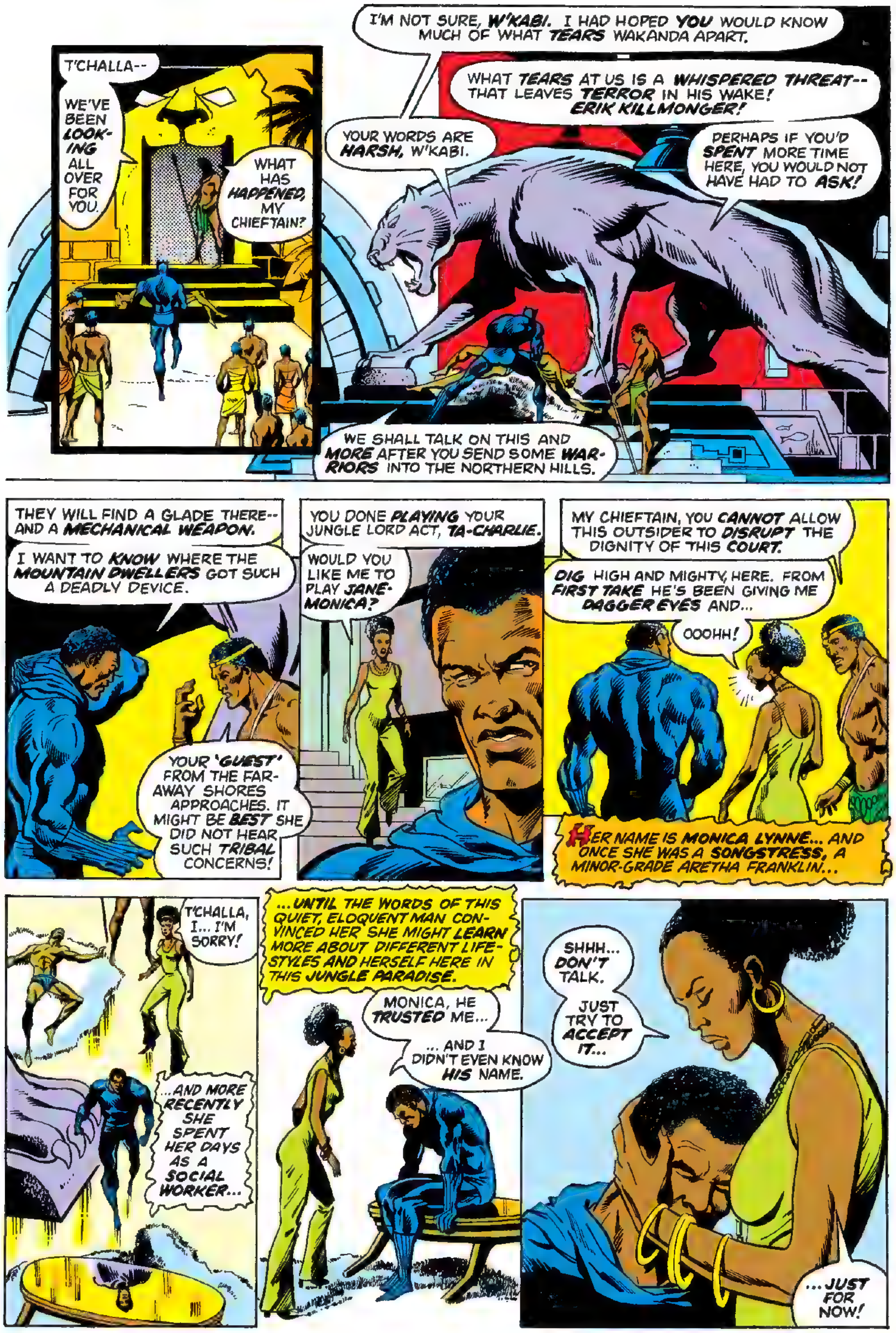
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
DON McGREGOR WRITER / RICH BUCKLER ARTIST / KLAUS JANSON INKER / TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST / ROY THOMAS EDITOR
PANTHER'S RAGE
THIS LITHE, OMINOUSLY GARBED FIGURE THAT PASSES AMONG THE HIGH BRANCHES IS NOT ONE OFTEN SUBJECT TO UNREASONING, TOTAL RAGE...
...FOR THIS IS THE BLACK PANTHER, KNOWN IN THIS FERTILE, RESPLENDENT JUNGLE GLADE OF THE WAKANDIAN NATION, AS T'CHALLA...
COME, WIZENED ONE, SPARE YOURSELF PAIN!
YOU'LL ANSWER KILLMONGER'S QUESTIONS!
TAYETE! ABOVE US!
THERE'S NOTHING BUT BIRDS...
TAYETE... THIS IS NO BIRD.
...AND HE HAS ALSO BEEN KNOWN AS A MAN OF COMPASSION... BUT NOW, HE IS FILLED WITH A SEETHING RAGE, EVOKED BY THE CASUAL CRUELTY THAT HIS GLARING, MENACING EYES WITNESS!
A MOMENT BEFORE, HE WAS RE-COMMUNICATING WITH THIS LAND THAT IS MORE THAN HIS IN NAME, RE-ESTABLISHING THE LINK THAT HAS WEAKENED SINCE HIS ABSENCE FROM HIS KINGDOM!
NOW THAT SENSE OF SERENITY IS SWEPT ASIDE... AND THIS REASONABLE MAN, THIS NOBLE MAN... CONSIDERS TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION!

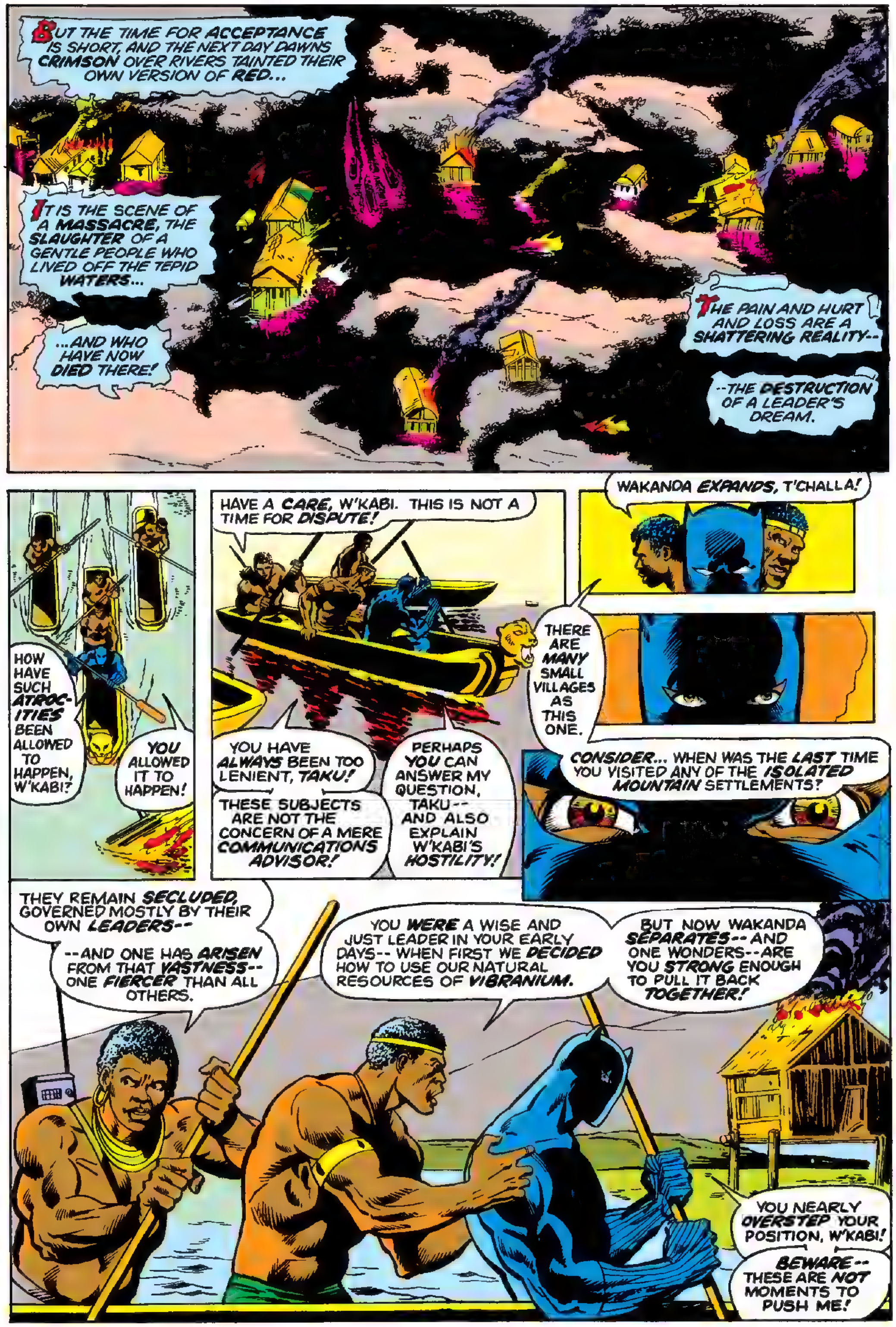
KCHUNK!
STAY YOUR HANDS, SCAVENGERS!
YOU'VE ENJOYED YOUR CRUEL GAMES, BUT YOU'LL TASTE THE POISON OF CRUELTY...
...AND YOU'LL TASTE IT... NOW!
AND YOU...
ME?
...YOU LOOK LOST WITHOUT YOUR "SECURITY BLANKET!"
SO I'LL JUST GIVE IT BACK!
KA-CHOK
A SLIGHT, DEADLY MECHANICAL CLICK BEHIND HIM ALERTS THE PANTHER TO A NEW DANGER--
--AND HE MOVES FLUIDLY, DIVING UNDER THOSE THUNDERING, LETHAL GUN BLASTS--
BRRRAT!
--SOUNDS AS ALIEN TO THIS SUN-SCORCHED GLADE--
--AS ARE THE TORTURED GASPS OF THE MAN BOUND INSIDE THE BAMBOO CAGE--

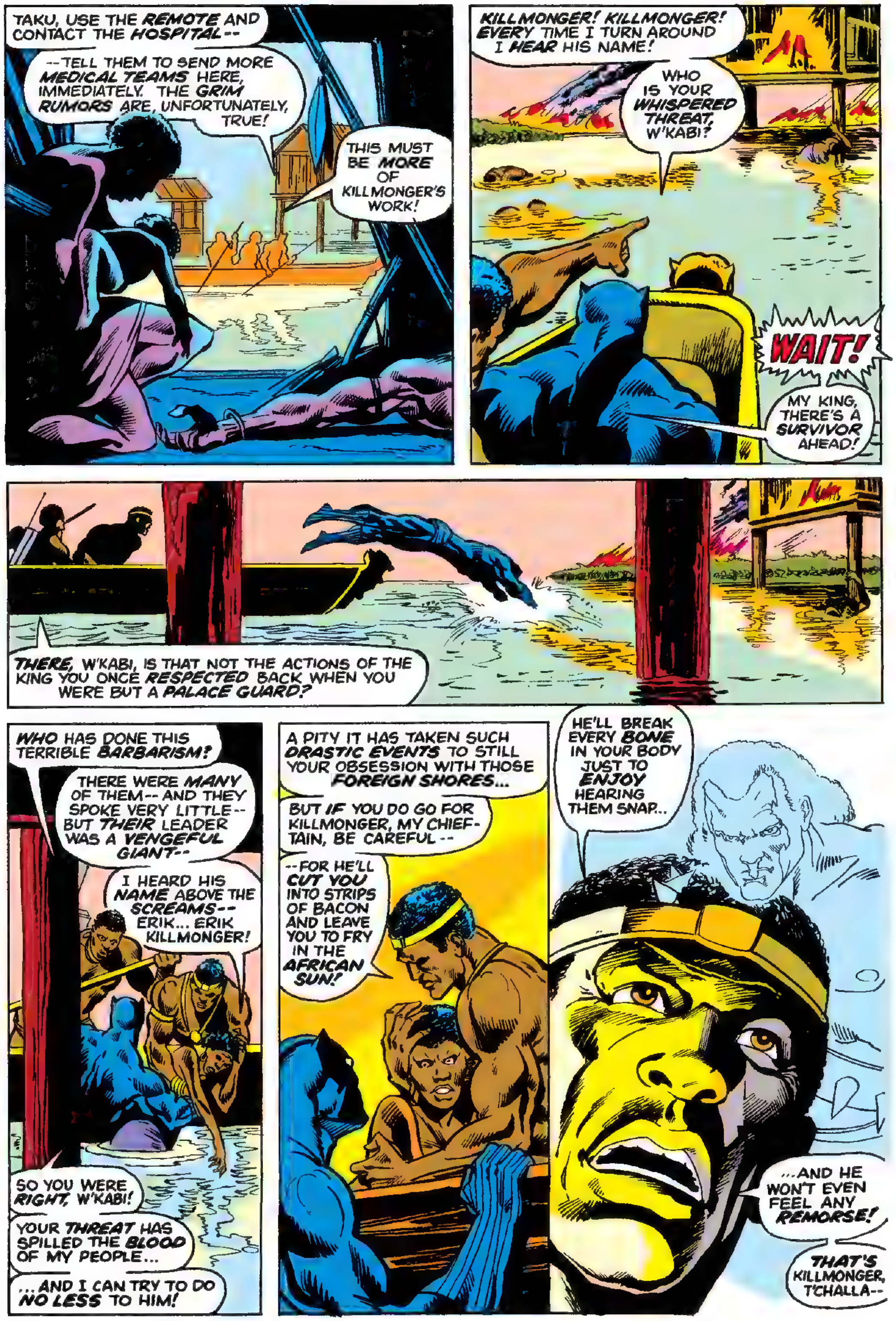
--AND BOTH SOUNDS FEED THE PANTHER'S RAGE!
YOU'LL NEED BETTER COMMAND OF YOUR CIVILIZED WEAPON IF YOU HOPE TO FELL THE KING OF WAKANDA.
I CAN BREAK YOU AS EASILY AS THIS GUN!
WAIT, PANTHER DEVIL--
IT'S BEEN LONG SINCE YOU BREATHED WAKANDIAN AIR--
--BUT YOU'LL NOT BREATHE ANY AIR MUCH LONGER!
PLEAS FOR MERCY AND ACTS OF TREACHERY--
--HOW OFTEN THE TWO BECOME UNWILLING COMPANIONS!
THE NOISE OF BATTLE FADES, REPLACED BY A KEENING WAIL THAT HAS BEEN EVER-PRESENT BUT OVERSHADOWED BY THE HARSH CONFLICT.
FLEE WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE! THIS SCORE IS NOT YET SETTLED!
BUT THAT CAN WAIT TILL AFTER I'VE USED ONE OF THEIR HIDEOUS TOOLS FOR LESS DESTRUCTIVE PURPOSES.


T'CHALLA--
THERE ARE FEW CAGES ON WAKANDAN SOIL, LOYAL FRIEND -- FOR THEY CAGE THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE BODY--
--AND I SHALL FREE BOTH FOR YOU!
-- MY CHIEFTAIN!
PERHAPS THE BODY, YES...
... BUT THE SPIRIT... SEEKS ITS OWN FLIGHT.
THE PANTHER KNEELS BEFORE A SIGHT THAT BURNS HIS VISION...
WHY DID THEY DO THIS TO YOU?
BECAUSE OF THE TERRIBLE TROUBLE THAT THREATENS WAKANDA! THEY SOUGHT TO LEARN WHAT ROYAL ORDERS WERE GIVEN FROM YOUR THRONE WHILE YOU WERE IN ABSENCE!
THEY DID NOT KNOW IT WAS YOUR EXPECTED COMING THAT STIRRED CENTRAL WAKANDA SO.
MANY OF THE PEOPLE SAID YOU'D NEVER COME BACK...
... THAT THE WAKANDAS HAD LOST THEIR KING! ... THAT YOU WOULD DESERT US!
BUT I KNEW THEY WERE WRONG.
YOU MUST BELIEVE... I NEVER LOST FAITH IN YOU, T'CHALLA!
I ALWAYS... BELIEVED.

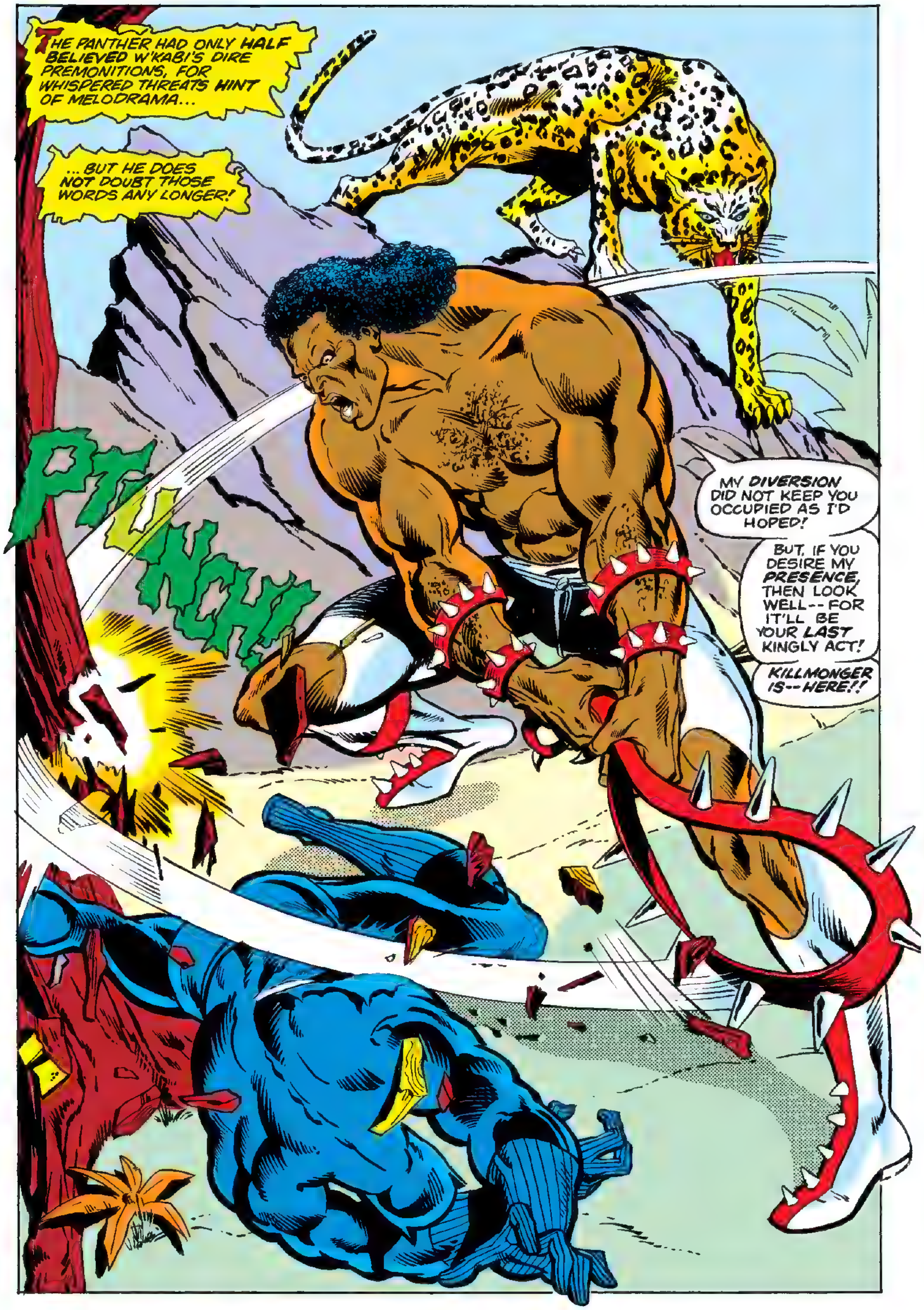

IT IS A LONG TREK BACK INTO THE CENTER OF THE WAKANDA VILLAGE...
...AND AS THE PANTHER STEPS OUT OF THE LUSH FOLIAGE INTO THE SUN-BURNT DUST SURROUNDING THE WOOD AND STRAW HUTS, ANOTHER DISTURBING THOUGHT CLAIMS HIM:
HE HAS BEEN AWAY TOO LONG.
ONCE, HE WAS ACUTELY ATTUNED TO THIS LAND... ...ONCE, HE WAS PART OF IT AND IT WAS A PART OF HIM...
...BUT NOW HE IS AWARE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SUBTLE, UNDEFINABLE CHANGE...
...AND HE IS NO LONGER AN INTEGRAL PART OF HIS HERITAGE!
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS AND OF THE DESTROYED HUMANITY HE HOLDS IN HIS ARMS IS REFLECTED IN HIS WALK.
A SOMBER WAKE FORMS THIS SILENT PROCESSION, ALL MUTE WITH ONE EMOTION:
MOURNING!


T'CHALLA--
WE'VE BEEN LOOK-ING ALL OVER FOR YOU.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED, MY CHIEFTAIN?
I'M NOT SURE, W'KABI. I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD KNOW MUCH OF WHAT TEARS WAKANDA APART.
WHAT TEARS AT US IS A WHISPERED THREAT--THAT LEAVES TERROR IN HIS WAKE! ERIK KILLMONGER!
YOUR WORDS ARE HARSH, W'KABI.
PERHAPS IF YOU'D SPENT MORE TIME HERE, YOU WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TO ASK!
WE SHALL TALK ON THIS AND MORE AFTER YOU SEND SOME WAR-RIORS INTO THE NORTHERN HILLS.
THEY WILL FIND A GLADE THERE-- AND A MECHANICAL WEAPON.
I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE MOUNTAIN DWELLERS GOT SUCH A DEADLY DEVICE.
YOUR 'GUEST' FROM THE FAR-AWAY SHORES APPROACHES. IT MIGHT BE BEST SHE DID NOT HEAR SUCH TRIBAL CONCERNS!
YOU DONE PLAYING YOUR JUNGLE LORD ACT, TA-CHARLIE.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO PLAY JANE-MONICA?
MY CHIEFTAIN, YOU CANNOT ALLOW THIS OUTSIDER TO DISRUPT THE DIGNITY OF THIS COURT.
DIG HIGH AND MIGHTY, HERE. FROM FIRST TAKE HE'S BEEN GIVING ME DAGGER EYES AND...
OOOHH!
HER NAME IS MONICA LYNNE... AND ONCE SHE WAS A SONGSTRESS, A MINOR-GRADE ARETHA FRANKLIN...
T'CHALLA, I... I'M SORRY!
...AND MORE RECENTLY SHE SPENT HER DAYS AS A SOCIAL WORKER...
...UNTIL THE WORDS OF THIS QUIET, ELOQUENT MAN CON-VINCED HER SHE MIGHT LEARN MORE ABOUT DIFFERENT LIFE-STYLES AND HERSELF HERE IN THIS JUNGLE PARADISE.
MONICA, HE TRUSTED ME...
...AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME.
SHHH... DON'T TALK.
JUST TRY TO ACCEPT IT...
...JUST FOR NOW!

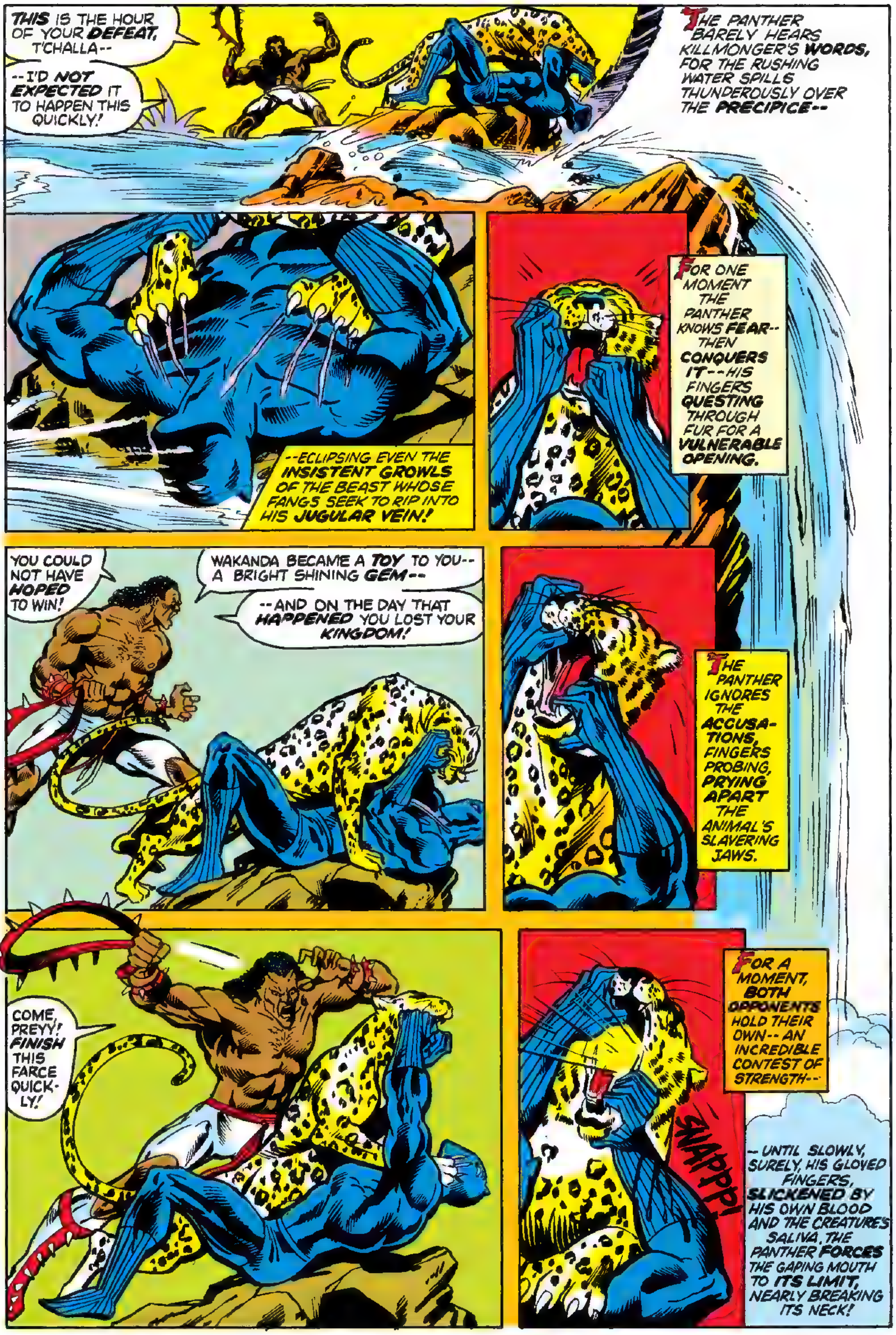

BUT THE TIME FOR ACCEPTANCE IS SHORT, AND THE NEXT DAY DAWNS CRIMSON OVER RIVERS TAINTED THEIR OWN VERSION OF RED...
IT IS THE SCENE OF A MASSACRE, THE SLAUGHTER OF A GENTLE PEOPLE WHO LIVED OFF THE TEPID WATERS...
...AND WHO HAVE NOW DIED THERE!
THE PAIN AND HURT AND LOSS ARE A SHATTERING REALITY--
--THE DESTRUCTION OF A LEADER'S DREAM.
HOW HAVE SUCH ATROC-ITIES BEEN ALLOWED TO HAPPEN, W'KABI?
YOU ALLOWED IT TO HAPPEN!
HAVE A CARE, W'KABI. THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR DISPUTE!
YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOO LENIENT, TAKU!
THESE SUBJECTS ARE NOT THE CONCERN OF A MERE COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR!
PERHAPS YOU CAN ANSWER MY QUESTION, TAKU-- AND ALSO EXPLAIN W'KABI'S HOSTILITY!
WAKANDA EXPANDS, T'CHALLA!
THERE ARE MANY SMALL VILLAGES AS THIS ONE.
CONSIDER... WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU VISITED ANY OF THE ISOLATED MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENTS?
THEY REMAIN SECLUDED, GOVERNED MOSTLY BY THEIR OWN LEADERS--
--AND ONE HAS ARISEN FROM THAT VASTNESS-- ONE FIERCER THAN ALL OTHERS.
YOU WERE A WISE AND JUST LEADER IN YOUR EARLY DAYS-- WHEN FIRST WE DECIDED HOW TO USE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES OF VIBRANIUM.
BUT NOW WAKANDA SEPARATES-- AND ONE WONDERS--ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL IT BACK TOGETHER!
YOU NEARLY OVERSTEP YOUR POSITION, W'KABI!
BEWARE-- THESE ARE NOT MOMENTS TO PUSH ME!


TAKU, USE THE REMOTE AND CONTACT THE HOSPITAL--
--TELL THEM TO SEND MORE MEDICAL TEAMS HERE, IMMEDIATELY. THE GRIM RUMORS ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, TRUE!
THIS MUST BE MORE OF KILLMONGER'S WORK!
KILLMONGER! KILLMONGER! EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND I HEAR HIS NAME!
WHO IS YOUR WHISPERED THREAT, W'KABI?
WAIT!
MY KING, THERE'S A SURVIVOR AHEAD!
THERE, W'KABI, IS THAT NOT THE ACTIONS OF THE KING YOU ONCE RESPECTED BACK WHEN YOU WERE BUT A PALACE GUARD?
WHO HAS DONE THIS TERRIBLE BARBARISM?
THERE WERE MANY OF THEM-- AND THEY SPOKE VERY LITTLE-- BUT THEIR LEADER WAS A VENGEFUL GIANT--
I HEARD HIS NAME ABOVE THE SCREAMS-- ERIK... ERIK KILLMONGER!
SO YOU WERE RIGHT, W'KABI!
YOUR THREAT HAS SPILLED THE BLOOD OF MY PEOPLE...
...AND I CAN TRY TO DO NO LESS TO HIM!
A PITY IT HAS TAKEN SUCH DRASTIC EVENTS TO STILL YOUR OBSESSION WITH THOSE FOREIGN SHORES...
BUT IF YOU DO GO FOR KILLMONGER, MY CHIEFTAIN, BE CAREFUL --
--FOR HE'LL CUT YOU INTO STRIPS OF BACON AND LEAVE YOU TO FRY IN THE AFRICAN SUN!
HE'LL BREAK EVERY BONE IN YOUR BODY JUST TO ENJOY HEARING THEM SNAP...
...AND HE WON'T EVEN FEEL ANY REMORSE!
THAT'S KILLMONGER, T'CHALLA--

YOU SOUND LIKE HIS PUBLICITY AGENT, W'KABI.
MY CHIEFTAIN, A CALL COMES FROM WARRIOR FALLS-- A GROUP OF MEN HAVE BEEN SPOTTED-- LED BY A GIANT MAN WITH-- A WHITE LEOPARD!
AS A CHILD, WARRIOR FALLS WAS A WORK OF WONDER TO T'CHALLA'S YOUNG EYES-- AND NOW, THOUGH HE HAS SEEN MANY WONDERS SINCE, THE CASCADING FALLS STILL INSPIRE AWE; THEIR ROAR IS LIKE THE RAGE THAT CONSUMES HIM!
TAYETE--
IF WE RUN INTO THAT PANTHER DEVIL AGAIN, I'M GOING TO RIP HIM LIMB FROM LIMB!
--NOT AGAIN.
HE'D RATHER LICK TONGUES WITH A COBRA THAN TANGLE WITH ME!
KAZIBE, WHAT ARE YOU MUM-BLING ABOU...!
I WILL ASK BUT ONCE: WHERE IS YOUR LEADER?
JUNGLE BRED INSTINCTS, NURTURED AND AIDED BY HERBAL MEDICINES AND RIGOROUS, OFT-REPEATED RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, CUT THROUGH THE PANTHER'S RAGE--
--AND ALERT HIM TO A SHIFTING OF SHADOWS-- A SLIGHT RUSTLE OF EXOTIC FERNS--AND THE INSTINCTIVE KNOWLEDGE THAT DEATH IS ABOUT TO STRIKE!


THE PANTHER HAD ONLY HALF BELIEVED W'KABI'S DIRE PREMONITIONS, FOR WHISPERED THREATS HINT OF MELODRAMA...
...BUT HE DOES NOT DOUBT THOSE WORDS ANY LONGER!
PTUNCH!
MY DIVERSION DID NOT KEEP YOU OCCUPIED AS I'D HOPED!
BUT, IF YOU DESIRE MY PRESENCE, THEN LOOK WELL--FOR IT'LL BE YOUR LAST KINGLY ACT!
KILLMONGER IS--HERE!!

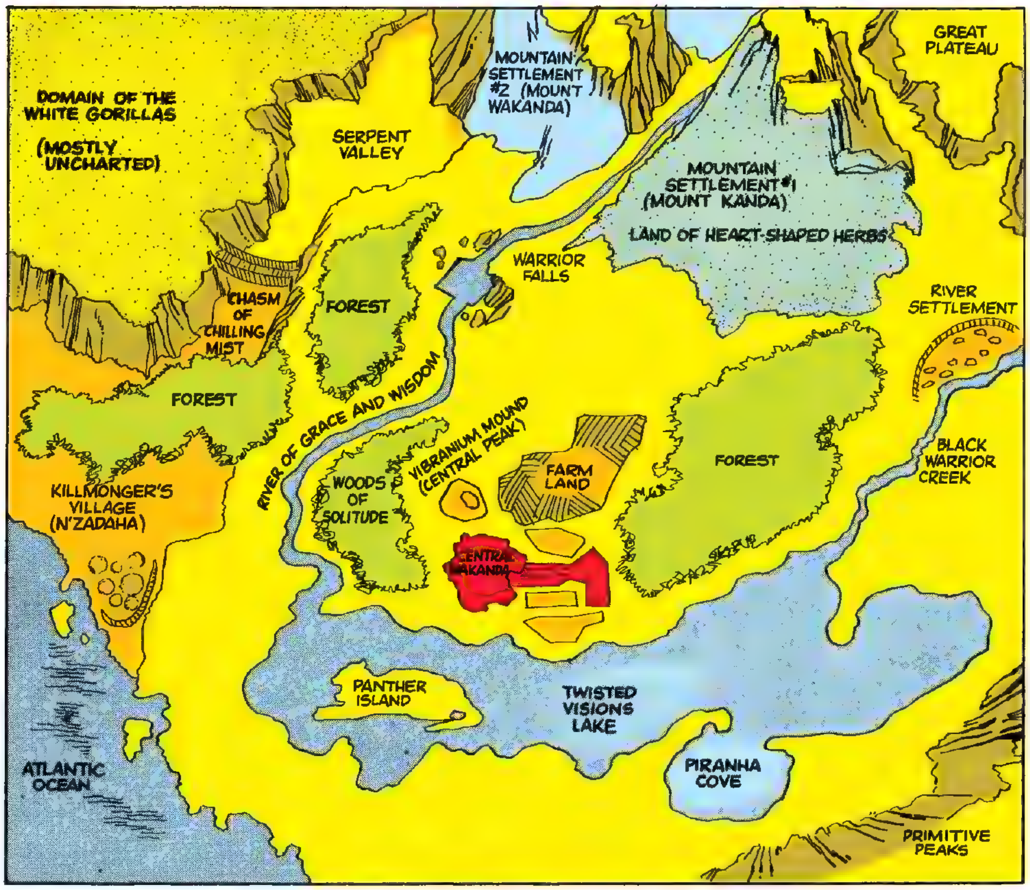
YOU ATTACKED THAT VILLAGE... EXACTED THAT CARNAGE... JUST TO DIVERT US?
YOU SOUND OUT-RAGED, T'CHALLA!
IT'S ALMOST AS IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THAT WE'VE MET BEFORE--!
IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE HEARD YOUR MORAL INDIGNATION, GRANTED...
...BUT WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? A METHOD OF ESCAPE? THERE...
... ISN'T...
...ANY!
THAT'S ONLY PARTIAL REPAYMENT. PERHAPS JUST ONE OF US WALKS FROM HERE TODAY!
WHAT'S THIS?
YOU'RE STILL STANDING!
IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO, T'CHALLA?
IF SO, I'M DISAP-POINTED.
MY CAT, PREYY...
...MAKES SHORT WORK OF MY DISAPPOINTMENTS!
THE LEOPARD HURTLES INTO THE PANTHER--A SNARL FOLLOWING ITS LUNGE...
...AND THE COPPER-WARM AIR FLASHES BEFORE HIS EYES AS HE BUCKLES UNDER THE ON-SLAUGHT!



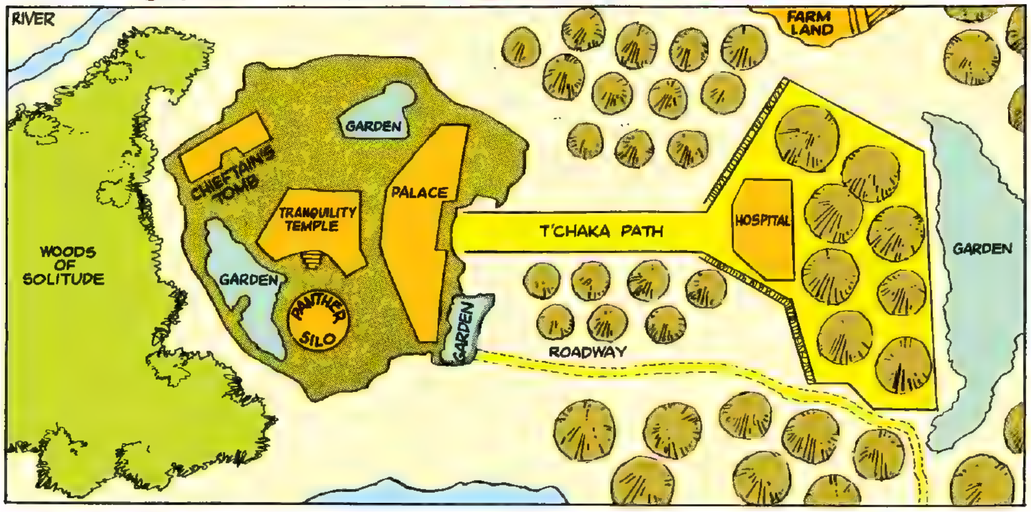
THIS IS THE HOUR OF YOUR DEFEAT, T'CHALLA--
--I'D NOT EXPECTED IT TO HAPPEN THIS QUICKLY!
THE PANTHER BARELY HEARS KILLMONGER'S WORDS, FOR THE RUSHING WATER SPILLS THUNDEROUSLY OVER THE PRECIPICE--
--ECLIPSING EVEN THE INSISTENT GROWLS OF THE BEAST WHOSE FANGS SEEK TO RIP INTO HIS JUGULAR VEIN!
FOR ONE MOMENT THE PANTHER KNOWS FEAR--THEN CONQUERS IT--HIS FINGERS QUESTING THROUGH FUR FOR A VULNERABLE OPENING.
YOU COULD NOT HAVE HOPED TO WIN!
WAKANDA BECAME A TOY TO YOU-- A BRIGHT SHINING GEM--
--AND ON THE DAY THAT HAPPENED YOU LOST YOUR KINGDOM!
THE PANTHER IGNORES THE ACCUSATIONS, FINGERS PROBING, PRYING APART THE ANIMAL'S SLAVERING JAWS.
COME, PREY! FINISH THIS FARCE QUICKLY!
FOR A MOMENT, BOTH OPPONENTS HOLD THEIR OWN-- AN INCREDIBLE CONTEST OF STRENGTH--
SNAPP!
--UNTIL SLOWLY, SURELY, HIS GLOVED FINGERS, SLICKENED BY HIS OWN BLOOD AND THE CREATURE'S SALIVA, THE PANTHER FORCES THE GAPING MOUTH TO ITS LIMIT, NEARLY BREAKING ITS NECK!

NO!!
I'LL NOT ALLOW PREYY TO DIE AT YOUR HANDS, T'CHALLA!
AWAY, PREYY!
YOU AND YOUR FATHER'S REIGN HAVE TAKEN TOO MUCH FROM ME ALREADY!
YOUR LINE OF DESCENT ENDS WITH YOU, AND YOU'LL TAKE NOTHING FROM ME EVER AGAIN!
GOOD BYE, GREAT AND MIGHTY KING!
YOU'VE RETURNED TO THE LAND OF YOUR BIRTH--
--ONLY TO DIE HERE!
NEXT:
DEATH REGIMENTS BENEATH WAKANDA
AND VENOMM

MAP OF THE LAND OF THE WAKANDA



CENTRAL WAKANDA



JUNGLE ACTION
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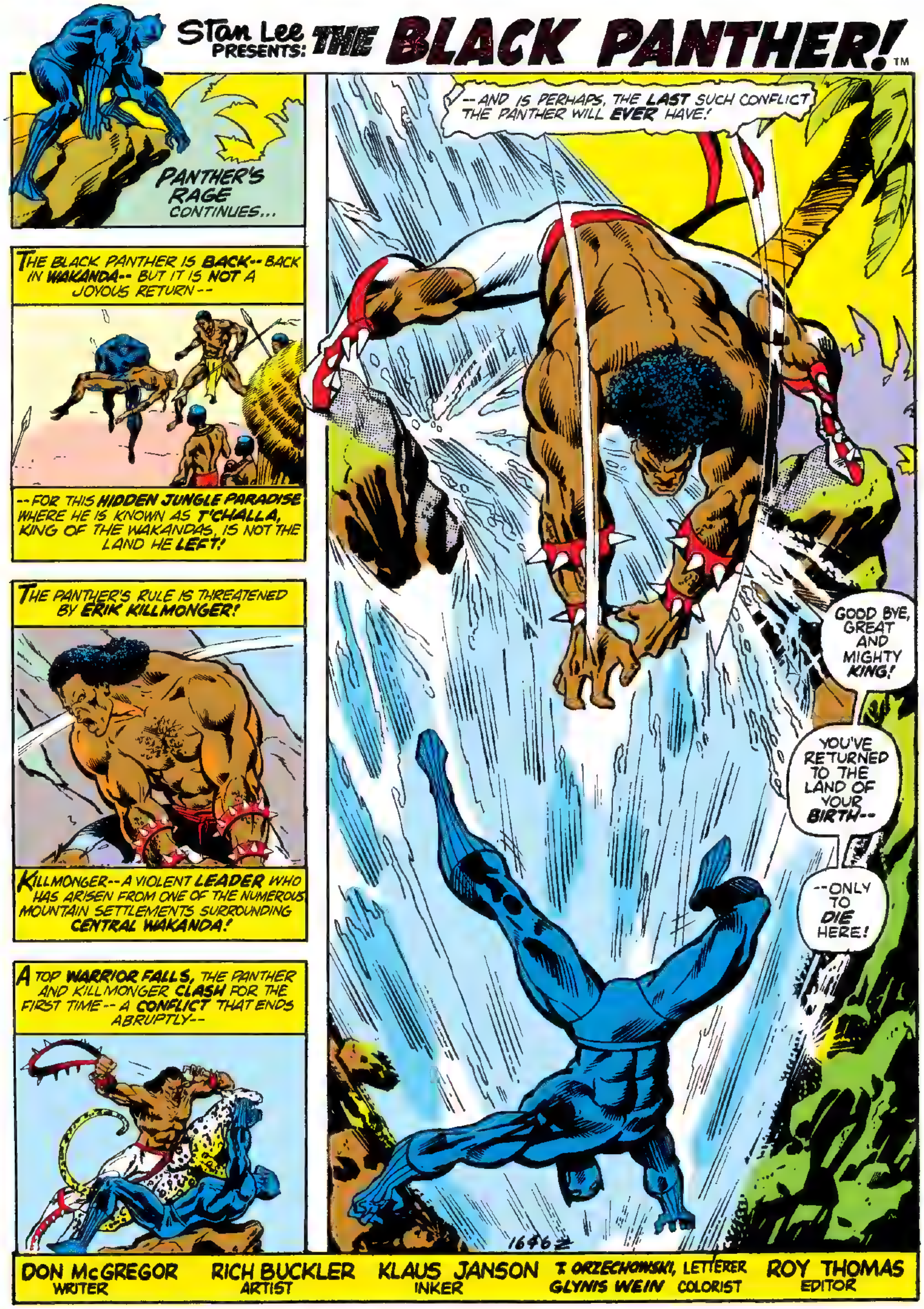
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
STRIKE, MY PETS! STRIKE-- AND SLAY!
THE BLACK PANTHER MUST DIE!
AND--IF I DON'T MOVE EVEN FASTER THAN THOSE VIPERS--
--THAT'S JUST WHAT'LL HAPPEN!
BUCKLER & JANSON
VENOMM IS HIS NAME-- AND MURDER IS HIS GAME!


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES...
THE BLACK PANTHER IS BACK-- BACK IN WAKANDA-- BUT IT IS NOT A JOYOUS RETURN--
--FOR THIS HIDDEN JUNGLE PARADISE WHERE HE IS KNOWN AS T'CHALLA, KING OF THE WAKANDAS, IS NOT THE LAND HE LEFT!
THE PANTHER'S RULE IS THREATENED BY ERIK KILLMONGER!
KILLMONGER-- A VIOLENT LEADER WHO HAS ARISEN FROM ONE OF THE NUMEROUS MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENTS SURROUNDING CENTRAL WAKANDA!
A TOP WARRIOR FALLS, THE PANTHER AND KILLMONGER CLASH FOR THE FIRST TIME-- A CONFLICT THAT ENDS ABRUPTLY--
--AND IS PERHAPS, THE LAST SUCH CONFLICT THE PANTHER WILL EVER HAVE!
GOOD BYE, GREAT AND MIGHTY KING!
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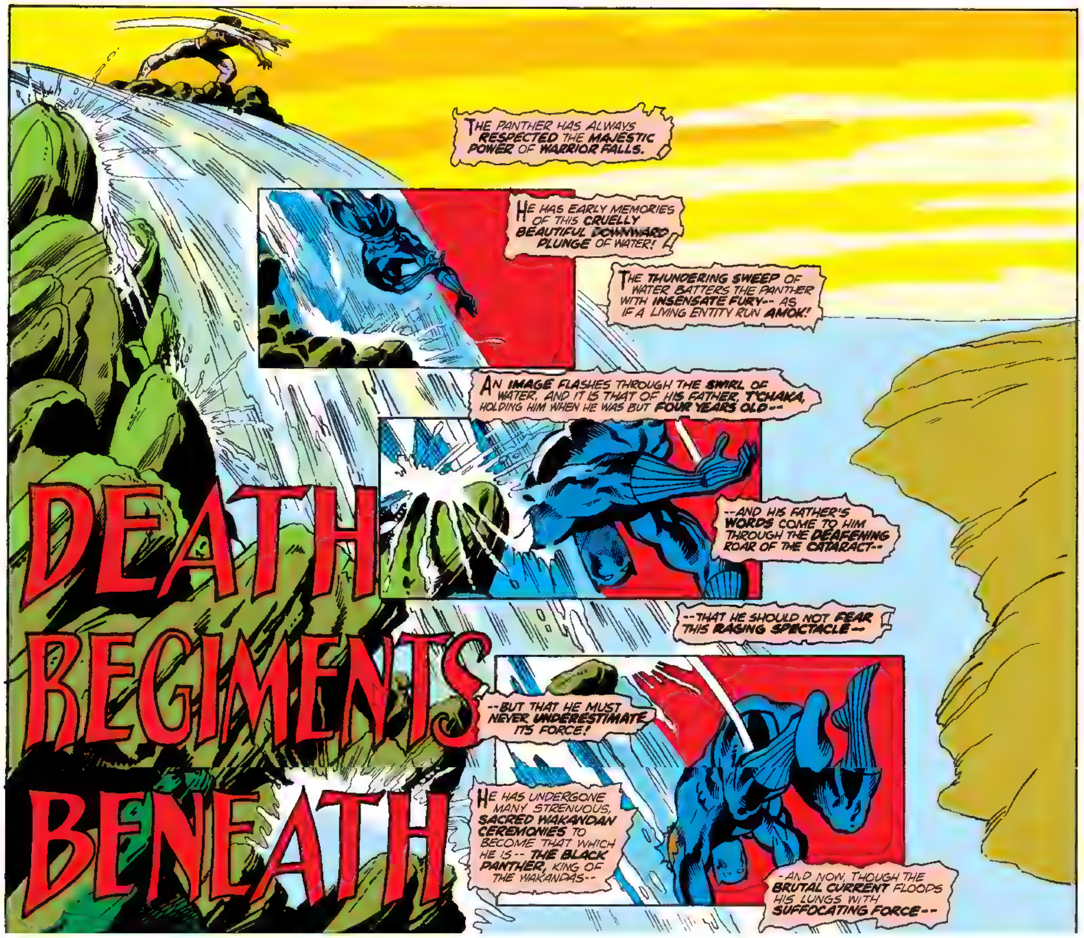
DEATH REGIMENTS BENEATH
THE PANTHER HAS ALWAYS RESPECTED THE MAJESTIC POWER OF WARRIOR FALLS.
HE HAS EARLY MEMORIES OF THIS CRUELLY BEAUTIFUL DOWNWARD PLUNGE OF WATER!
THE THUNDERING SWEEP OF WATER BATTERS THE PANTHER WITH INSENSATE FURY-- AS IF A LIVING ENTITY RUN AMOK!
AN IMAGE FLASHES THROUGH THE SWIRL OF WATER, AND IT IS THAT OF HIS FATHER, T'CHAKA, HOLDING HIM WHEN HE WAS BUT FOUR YEARS OLD--
--AND HIS FATHER'S WORDS COME TO HIM THROUGH THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE CATARACT--
--THAT HE SHOULD NOT FEAR THIS RAGING SPECTACLE--
--BUT THAT HE MUST NEVER UNDERESTIMATE ITS FORCE!
HE HAS UNDERGONE MANY STRENUOUS, SACRED WAKANDAN CEREMONIES TO BECOME THAT WHICH HE IS-- THE BLACK PANTHER, KING OF THE WAKANDAS--
-AND NOW, THOUGH THE BRUTAL CURRENT FLOODS HIS LUNGS WITH SUFFOCATING FORCE--

REGIMENTS BENEATH WAKANDA
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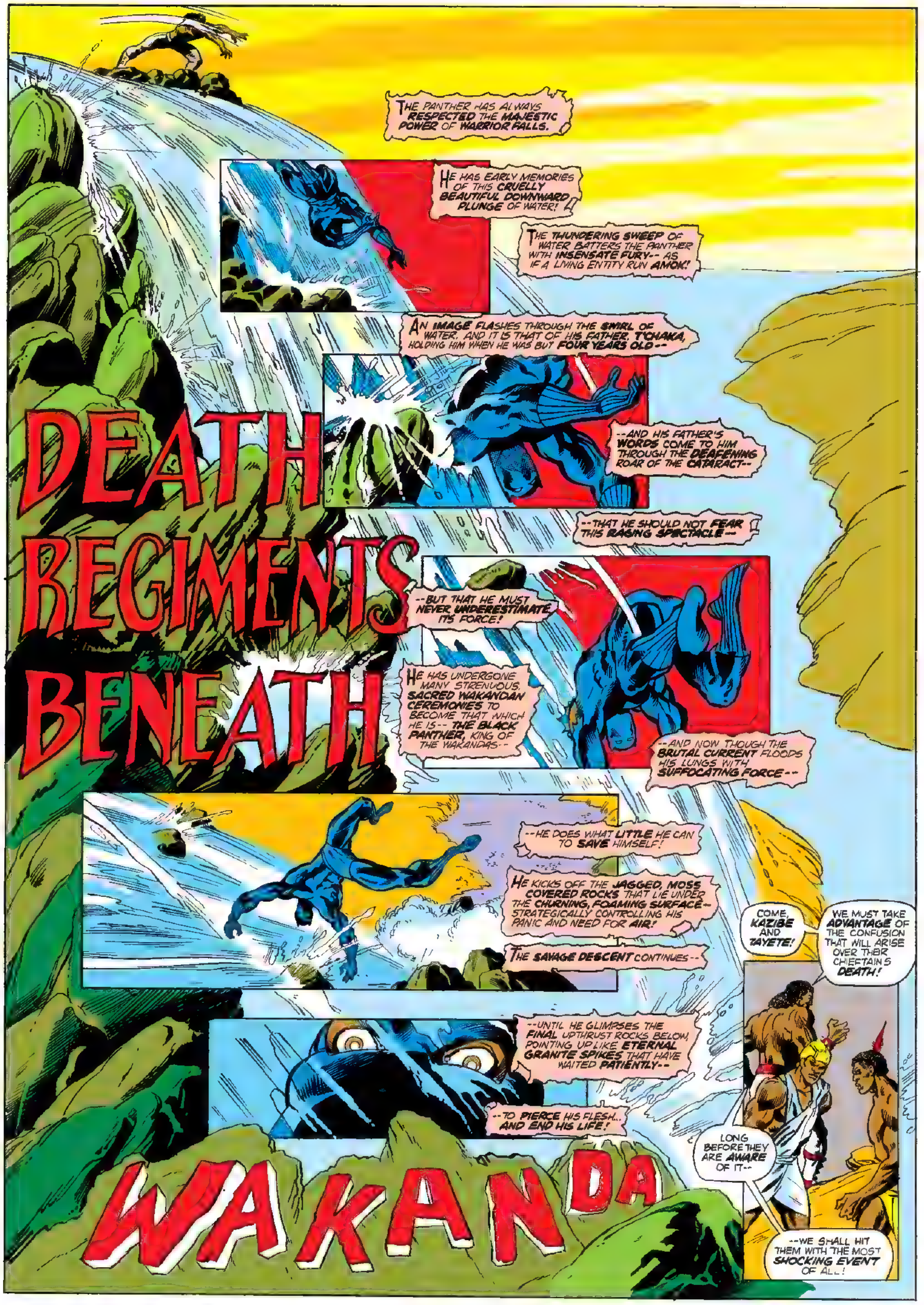
--HE DOES WHAT LITTLE HE CAN TO SAVE HIMSELF!
HE KICKS OFF THE JAGGED, MOSS COVERED ROCKS THAT LIE UNDER THE CHURNING, FOAMING SURFACE-- STRATEGICALLY CONTROLLING HIS PANIC AND NEED FOR AIR!
THE SAVAGE DESCENT CONTINUES--
--UNTIL HE GLIMPSES THE FINAL UPTHRUST ROCKS BELOW, POINTING UP LIKE ETERNAL GRANITE SPIKES THAT HAVE WAITED PATIENTLY--
--TO PIERCE HIS FLESH... AND END HIS LIFE!
COME, KAZIBE AND TAYETE!
WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFUSION THAT WILL ARISE OVER THEIR CHIEFTAIN'S DEATH!
LONG BEFORE THEY ARE AWARE OF IT--
--WE SHALL HIT THEM WITH THE MOST SHOCKING EVENT OF ALL!



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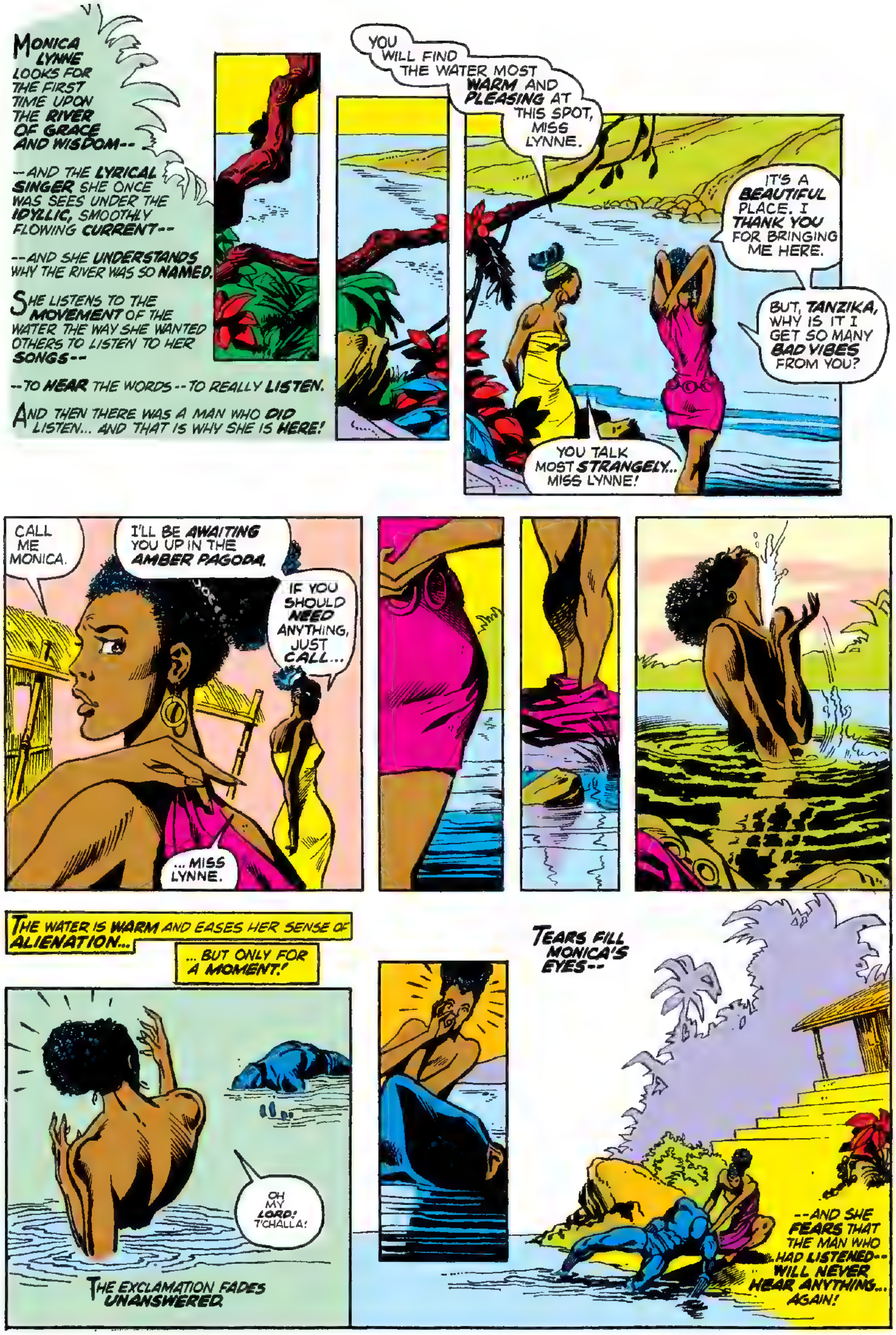
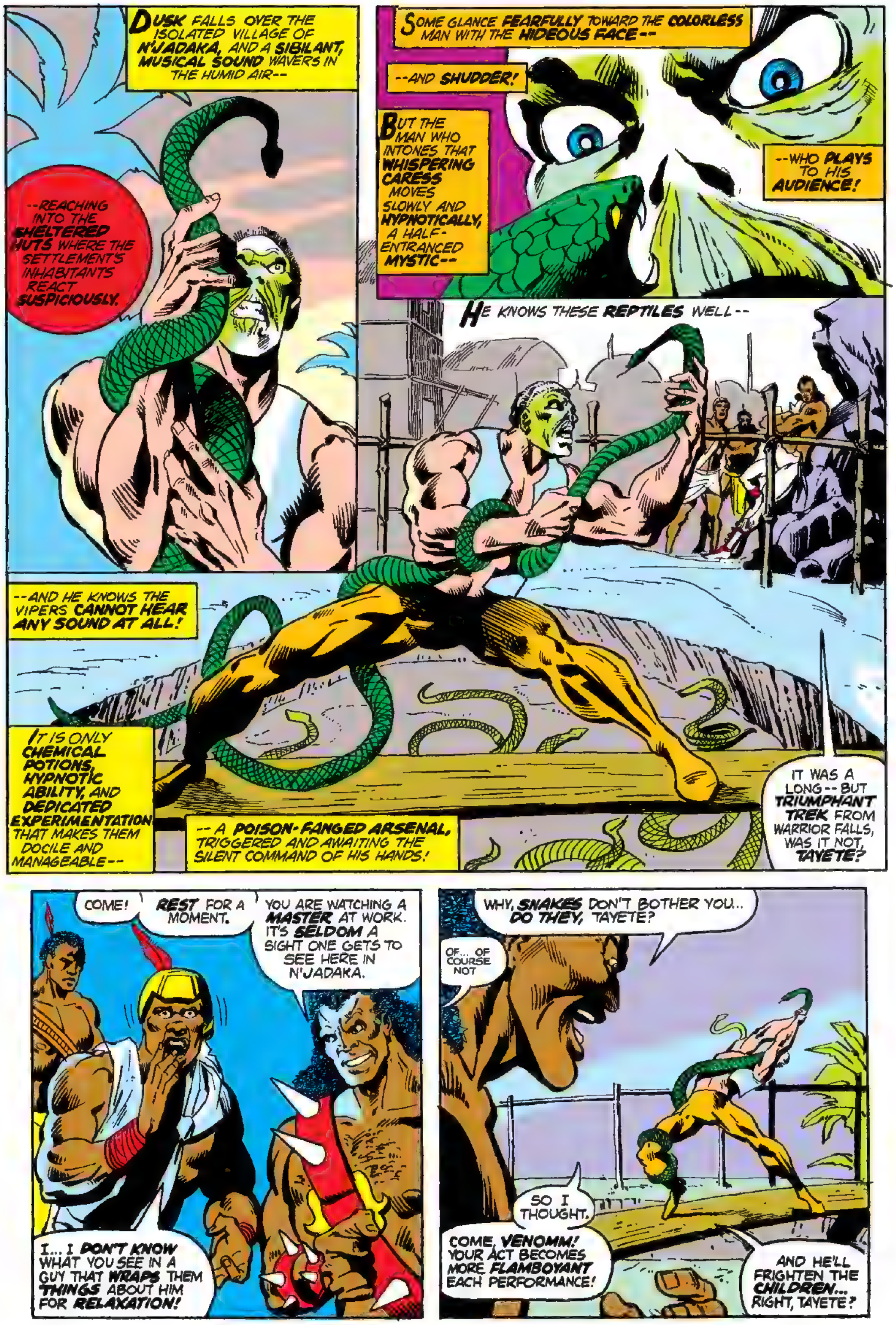
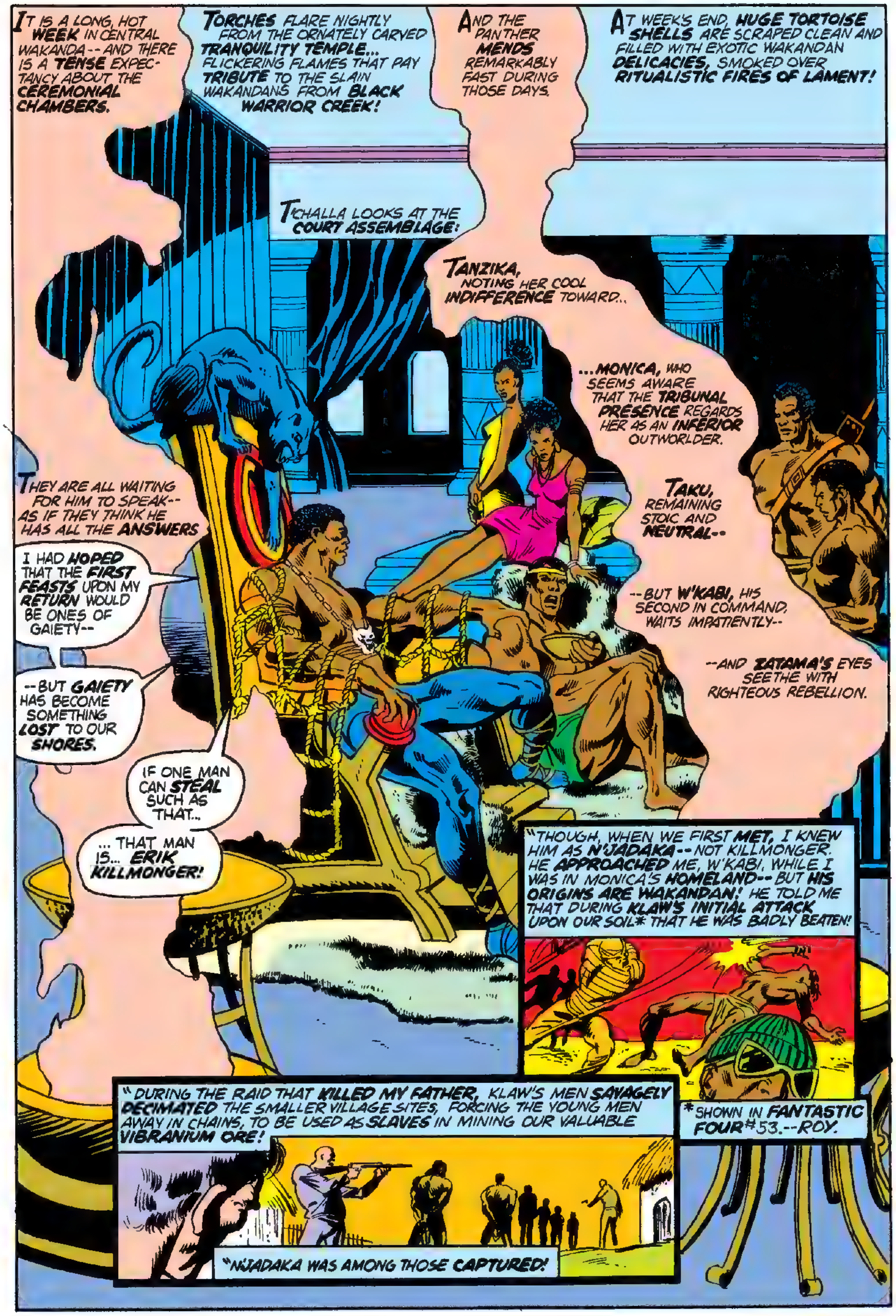
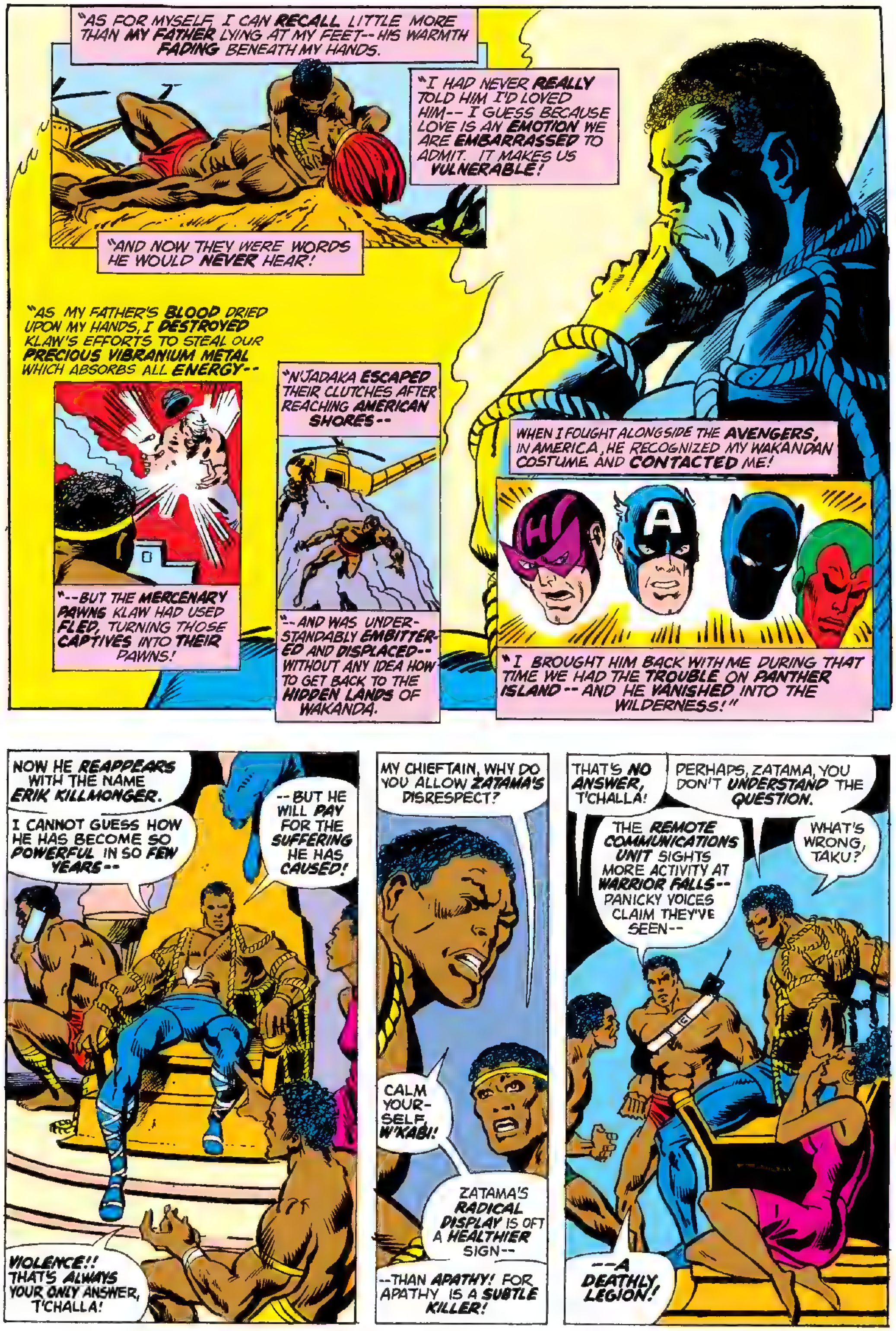

MONICA LYNNE LOOKS FOR THE FIRST TIME UPON THE RIVER OF GRACE AND WISDOM--
--AND THE LYRICAL SINGER SHE ONCE WAS SEES UNDER THE IDYLLIC, SMOOTHLY FLOWING CURRENT--
--AND SHE UNDERSTANDS WHY THE RIVER WAS SO NAMED.
SHE LISTENS TO THE MOVEMENT OF THE WATER THE WAY SHE WANTED OTHERS TO LISTEN TO HER SONGS--
--TO HEAR THE WORDS--TO REALLY LISTEN.
AND THEN THERE WAS A MAN WHO DID LISTEN... AND THAT IS WHY SHE IS HERE!
YOU WILL FIND THE WATER MOST WARM AND PLEASING AT THIS SPOT, MISS LYNNE.
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PLACE. I THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME HERE.
BUT, TANZIKA, WHY IS IT I GET SO MANY BAD VIBES FROM YOU?
YOU TALK MOST STRANGELY... MISS LYNNE!
CALL ME MONICA.
I'LL BE AWAITING YOU UP IN THE AMBER PAGODA.
IF YOU SHOULD NEED ANYTHING, JUST CALL...
...MISS LYNNE.
THE WATER IS WARM AND EASES HER SENSE OF ALIENATION...
...BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT!
OH MY LORD! T'CHALLA!
THE EXCLAMATION FADES UNANSWERED.
TEARS FILL MONICA'S EYES--
--AND SHE FEARS THAT THE MAN WHO HAD LISTENED--WILL NEVER HEAR ANYTHING... AGAIN!

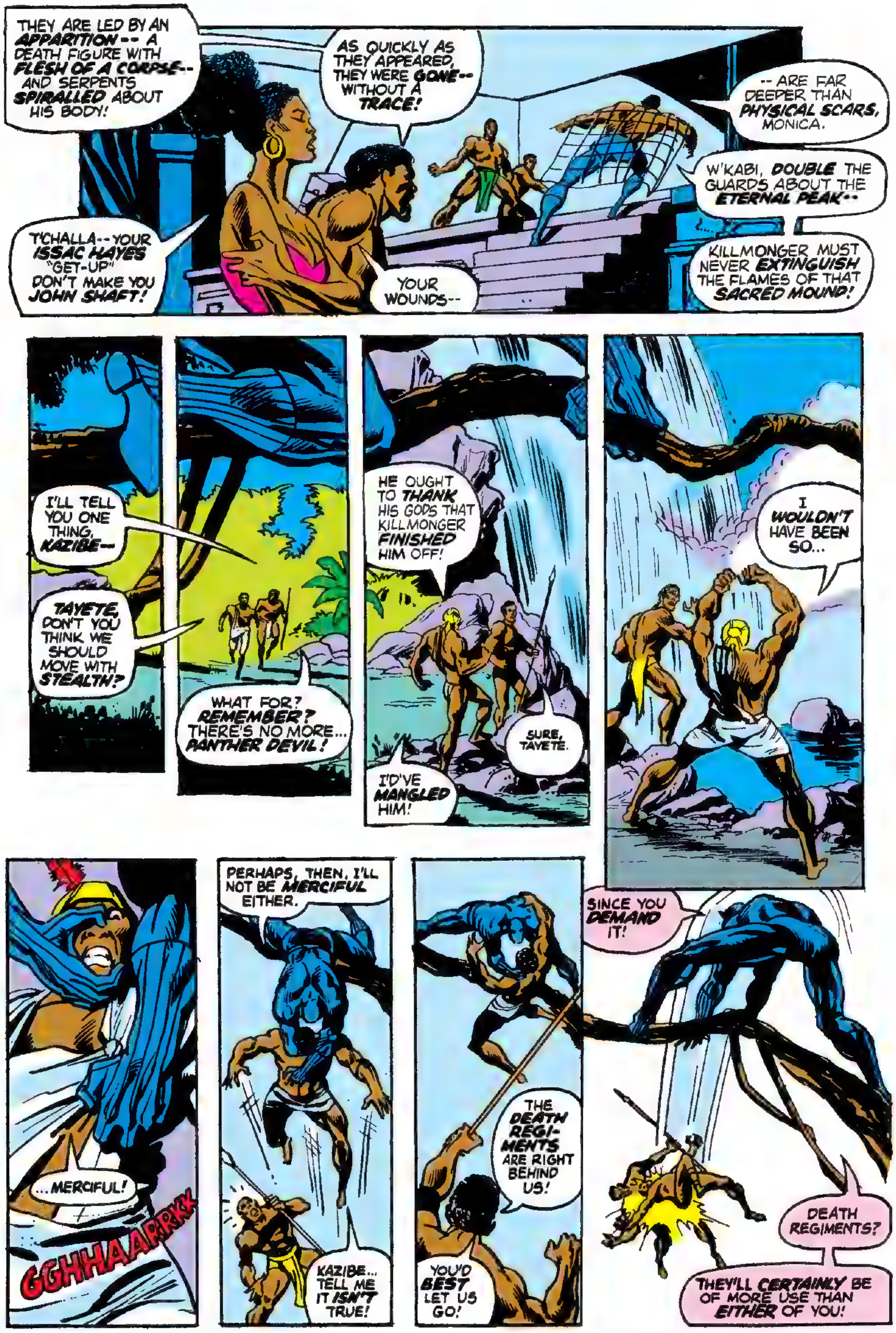

DUSK FALLS OVER THE ISOLATED VILLAGE OF N'JADAKA, AND A SIBILANT, MUSICAL SOUND WAVERS IN THE HUMID AIR--
--REACHING INTO THE SHELTERED HUTS WHERE THE SETTLEMENT'S INHABITANTS REACT SUSPICIOUSLY.
SOME GLANCE FEARFULLY TOWARD THE COLORLESS MAN WITH THE HIDEOUS FACE--
--AND SHUDDER!
BUT THE MAN WHO INTONES THAT WHISPERING CARESS MOVES SLOWLY AND HYPNOTICALLY, A HALF-ENTRANCED MYSTIC--
--WHO PLAYS TO HIS AUDIENCE!
HE KNOWS THESE REPTILES WELL--
--AND HE KNOWS THE VIPERS CANNOT HEAR ANY SOUND AT ALL!
IT IS ONLY CHEMICAL POTIONS, HYPNOTIC ABILITY, AND DEDICATED EXPERIMENTATION THAT MAKES THEM DOCILE AND MANAGEABLE--
-- A POISON-FANGED ARSENAL, TRIGGERED AND AWAITING THE SILENT COMMAND OF HIS HANDS!
IT WAS A LONG--BUT TRIUMPHANT TREK FROM WARRIOR FALLS, WAS IT NOT, TAYETE?
COME!
REST FOR A MOMENT.
YOU ARE WATCHING A MASTER AT WORK. IT'S SELDOM A SIGHT ONE GETS TO SEE HERE IN N'JADAKA.
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU SEE IN A GUY THAT WRAPS THEM THINGS ABOUT HIM FOR RELAXATION!
WHY, SNAKES DON'T BOTHER YOU.. DO THEY, TAYETE?
OF... OF COURSE NOT
SO I THOUGHT.
COME, VENOMM! YOUR ACT BECOMES MORE FLAMBOYANT EACH PERFORMANCE!
AND HE'LL FRIGHTEN THE CHILDREN... RIGHT, TAYETE?

N'JADAKA--
I DISCARDED THAT NAME-- IT'S NOW KILLMONGER. YOU SHOULD RECALL THAT, HORATIO!
YOU'RE RIGHT! BECAUSE I CHOSE THIS NAME--
--VENOMM!
IT'S A BITTER TASTE--
--AN' IT KEEPS LINGERIN' IN MY MIND.
I PROMISED YOU, FRIEND, A PLACE WHERE YOU COULD CARRY ON YOUR REPTILIAN PRACTICES--
--BUT ALSO A PLACE WHERE YOU WOULD BE ACCEPTED.
THAT PLACE IS HERE! THE TIME IS NOW!
I'VE HEARD THE MELODY BEFORE--
--NEVER CARED FOR THE REFRAIN!
THOSE AREN'T IMPASSIONED PROMISES FOR THE FOLLOWERS!
THE ATTACK UPON THE RIVER SITE AT BLACK WARRIOR CREEK DID NOT DIVERT OUR MAJOR OBSTACLE, THE PANTHER--
--AND AS A RESULT THE WAKANDAN'S DARLING IDOL IS NO LONGER ANY OBSTACLE AT ALL!
WE ARE ABOUT TO HIT THE WAKANDANS RIGHT WHERE THEY LIVE!
BUT, ENOUGH ARROGANCE. YOU SHOULD BE ON YOUR WAY TO THE MINES, VENOMM!
WHAT I DON'T UNDER-STAND--
--IS WHY YOU PUT THAT ANEMIC FREAK IN CHARGE OF THE DEATH REGIMENTS INSTEAD OF..
KTHOOM!
YOU, TAYETE?
THAT'S NOT A QUESTION THAT NEEDS ANSWERING.
AND YOU SHOULD BEWARE, TAYETE, LEST VENOMM EVER OVERHEAR YOUR SENTIMENTS.
HE DOES NOT WEAR THOSE SERPENTS AS DECORATIONS!

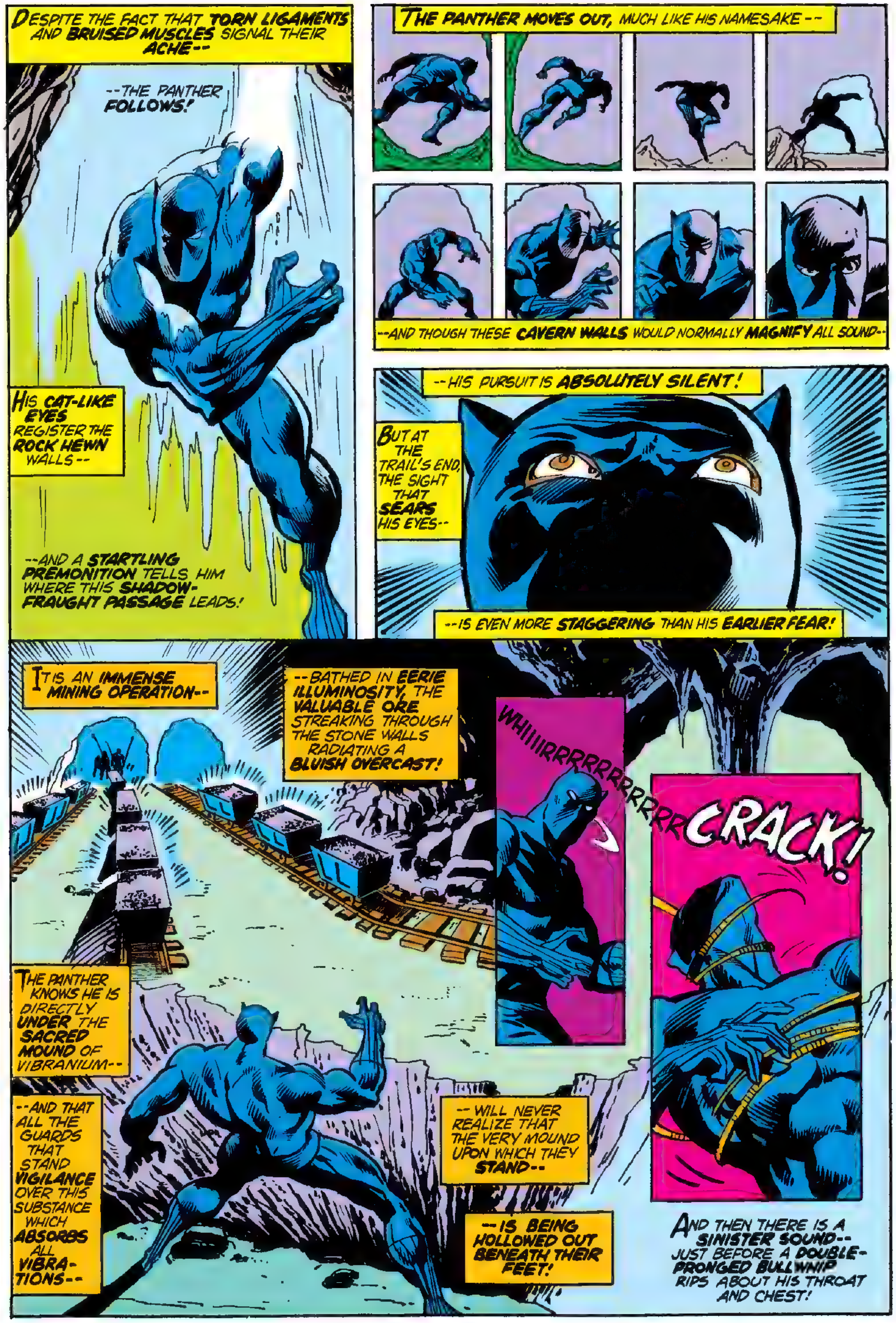


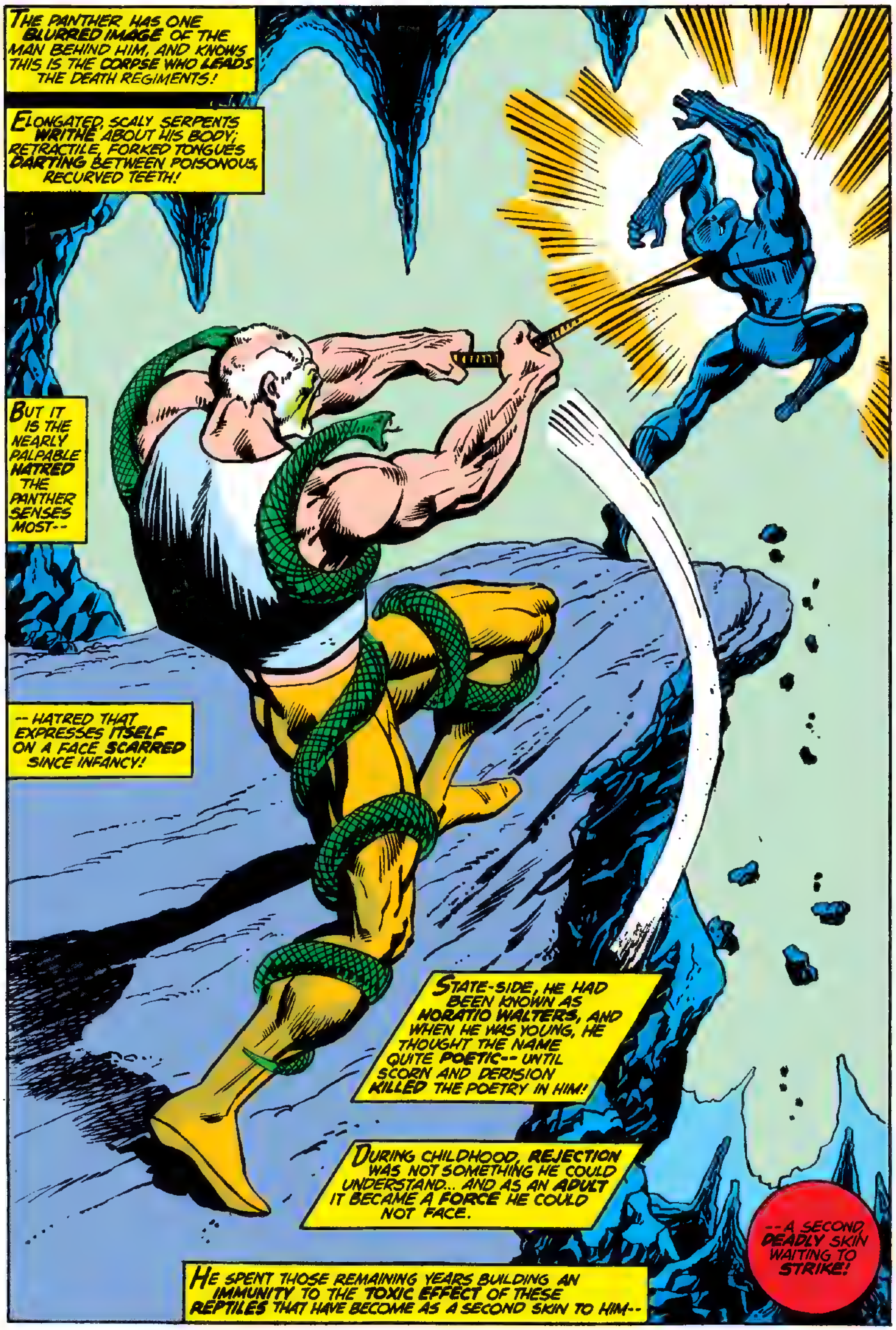
IT IS A LONG, HOT WEEK IN CENTRAL WAKANDA-- AND THERE IS A TENSE EXPECTANCY ABOUT THE CEREMONIAL CHAMBERS.
TORCHES FLARE NIGHTLY FROM THE ORNATELY CARVED TRANQUILITY TEMPLE... FLICKERING FLAMES THAT PAY TRIBUTE TO THE SLAIN WAKANDANS FROM BLACK WARRIOR CREEK!
AND THE PANTHER MENDS REMARKABLY FAST DURING THOSE DAYS.
AT WEEK'S END, HUGE TORTOISE SHELLS ARE SCRAPED CLEAN AND FILLED WITH EXOTIC WAKANDAN DELICACIES, SMOKED OVER RITUALISTIC FIRES OF LAMENT!
T'CHALLA LOOKS AT THE COURT ASSEMBLAGE:
TANZIKA, NOTING HER COOL INDIFFERENCE TOWARD...
...MONICA, WHO SEEMS AWARE THAT THE TRIBUNAL PRESENCE REGARDS HER AS AN INFERIOR OUTWORLDER.
TAKU, REMAINING STOIC AND NEUTRAL--
--BUT W'KABI, HIS SECOND IN COMMAND, WAITS IMPATIENTLY--
--AND ZATAMA'S EYES SEETHE WITH RIGHTEOUS REBELLION.
THEY ARE ALL WAITING FOR HIM TO SPEAK-- AS IF THEY THINK HE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS
I HAD HOPED THAT THE FIRST FEASTS UPON MY RETURN WOULD BE ONES OF GAIETY--
--BUT GAIETY HAS BECOME SOMETHING LOST TO OUR SHORES.
IF ONE MAN CAN STEAL SUCH AS THAT...
... THAT MAN IS... ERIK KILLMONGER!
"THOUGH, WHEN WE FIRST MET, I KNEW HIM AS N'JADAKA-- NOT KILLMONGER. HE APPROACHED ME, W'KABI, WHILE I WAS IN MONICA'S HOMELAND-- BUT HIS ORIGINS ARE WAKANDAN! HE TOLD ME THAT DURING KLAW'S INITIAL ATTACK UPON OUR SOIL* THAT HE WAS BADLY BEATEN!
"DURING THE RAID THAT KILLED MY FATHER, KLAW'S MEN SAVAGELY DECIMATED THE SMALLER VILLAGE SITES, FORCING THE YOUNG MEN AWAY IN CHAINS, TO BE USED AS SLAVES IN MINING OUR VALUABLE VIBRANIUM ORE!
*SHOWN IN FANTASTIC FOUR #53.--ROY.
"N'JADAKA WAS AMONG THOSE CAPTURED!

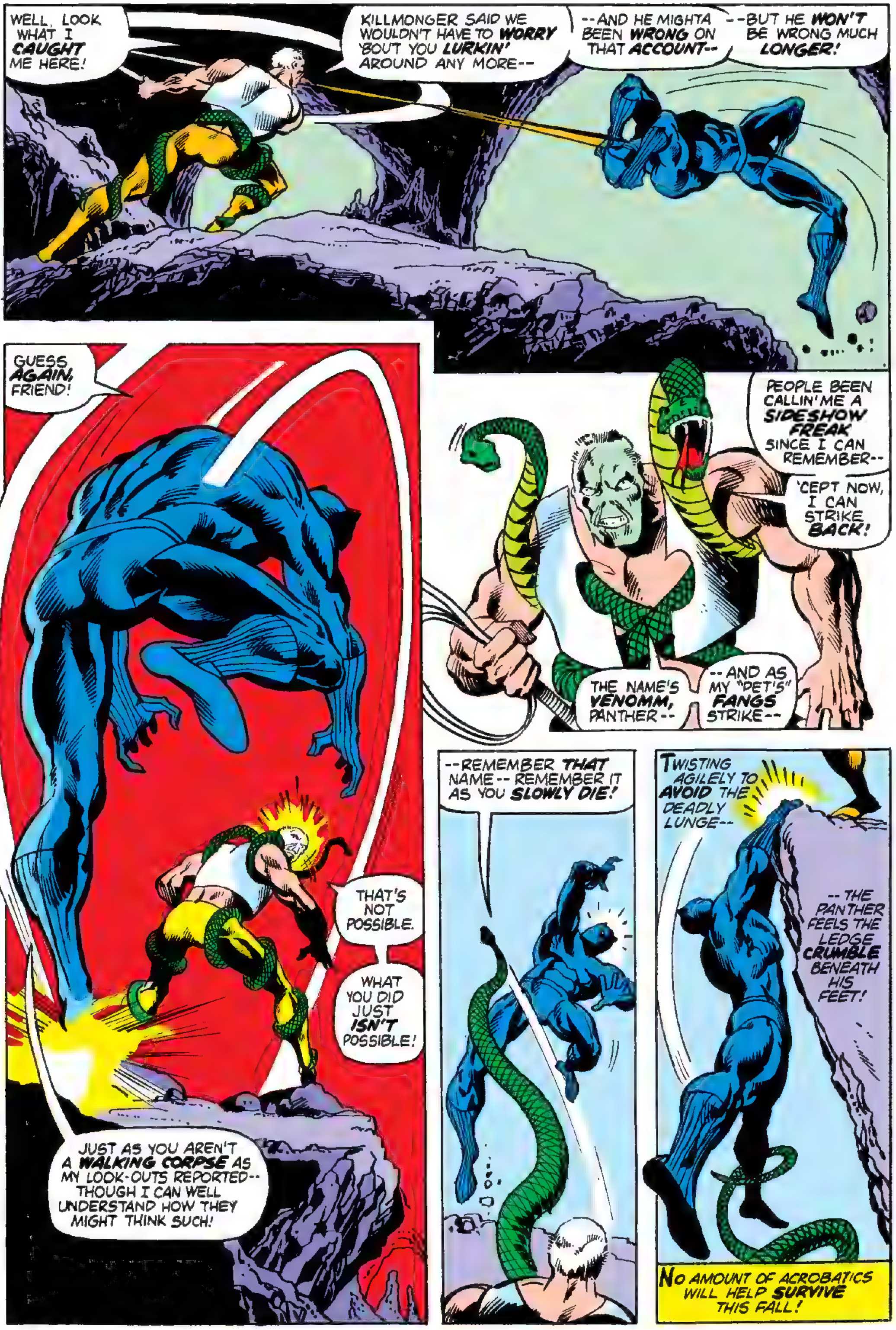

"AS FOR MYSELF, I CAN RECALL LITTLE MORE THAN MY FATHER LYING AT MY FEET-- HIS WARMTH FADING BENEATH MY HANDS.
"I HAD NEVER REALLY TOLD HIM I'D LOVED HIM-- I GUESS BECAUSE LOVE IS AN EMOTION WE ARE EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT. IT MAKES US VULNERABLE!
"AND NOW THEY WERE WORDS HE WOULD NEVER HEAR!
"AS MY FATHER'S BLOOD DRIED UPON MY HANDS, I DESTROYED KLAW'S EFFORTS TO STEAL OUR PRECIOUS VIBRANIUM METAL WHICH ABSORBS ALL ENERGY--
"--BUT THE MERCENARY PAWNS KLAW HAD USED FLED, TURNING THOSE CAPTIVES INTO THEIR PAWNS!
"N'JADAKA ESCAPED THEIR CLUTCHES AFTER REACHING AMERICAN SHORES--
"--AND WAS UNDERSTANDABLY EMBITTERED AND DISPLACED-- WITHOUT ANY IDEA HOW TO GET BACK TO THE HIDDEN LANDS OF WAKANDA.
WHEN I FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THE AVENGERS, IN AMERICA, HE RECOGNIZED MY WAKANDAN COSTUME AND CONTACTED ME!
"I BROUGHT HIM BACK WITH ME DURING THAT TIME WE HAD THE TROUBLE ON PANTHER ISLAND -- AND HE VANISHED INTO THE WILDERNESS!"
NOW HE REAPPEARS WITH THE NAME ERIK KILLMONGER.
I CANNOT GUESS HOW HE HAS BECOME SO POWERFUL IN SO FEW YEARS--
--BUT HE WILL PAY FOR THE SUFFERING HE HAS CAUSED!
VIOLENCE!! THAT'S ALWAYS YOUR ONLY ANSWER, T'CHALLA!
MY CHIEFTAIN, WHY DO YOU ALLOW ZATAMA'S DISRESPECT?
CALM YOURSELF, W'KABI!
ZATAMA'S RADICAL DISPLAY IS OFT A HEALTHIER SIGN--
--THAN APATHY! FOR APATHY IS A SUBTLE KILLER!
THAT'S NO ANSWER, T'CHALLA!
PERHAPS, ZATAMA, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.
THE REMOTE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT SIGHTS MORE ACTIVITY AT WARRIOR FALLS-- PANICKY VOICES CLAIM THEY'VE SEEN--
WHAT'S WRONG, TAKU?
--A DEATHLY LEGION!

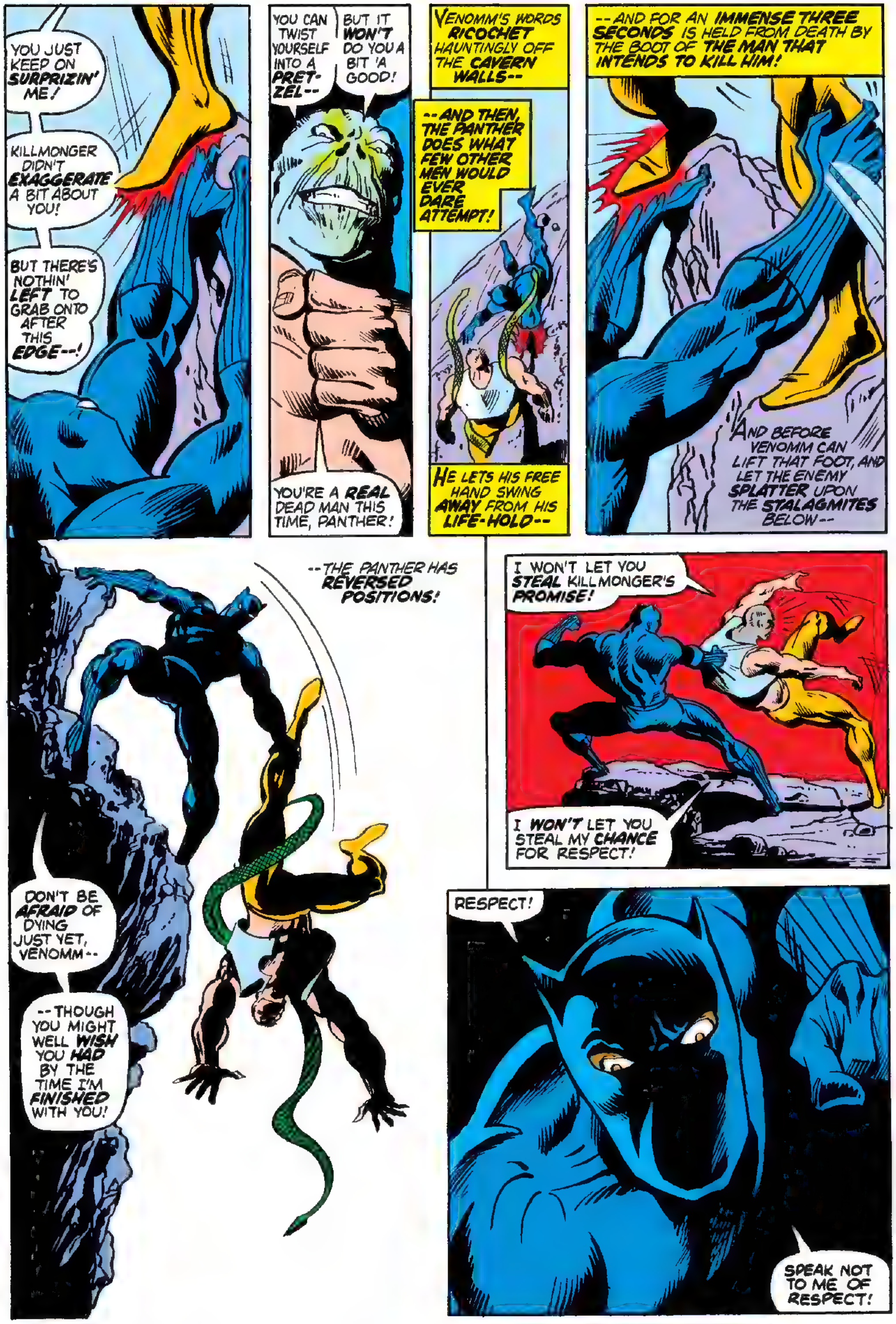

THEY ARE LED BY AN APPARITION -- A DEATH FIGURE WITH FLESH OF A CORPSE-- AND SERPENTS SPIRALLED ABOUT HIS BODY!
AS QUICKLY AS THEY APPEARED, THEY WERE GONE-- WITHOUT A TRACE!
T'CHALLA--YOUR ISSAC HAYES "GET-UP" DON'T MAKE YOU JOHN SHAFT!
YOUR WOUNDS--
-- ARE FAR DEEPER THAN PHYSICAL SCARS, MONICA.
W'KABI, DOUBLE THE GUARDS ABOUT THE ETERNAL PEAK--
KILLMONGER MUST NEVER EXTINGUISH THE FLAMES OF THAT SACRED MOUND!
I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING, KAZIBE--
TAYETE, DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD MOVE WITH STEALTH?
WHAT FOR? REMEMBER? THERE'S NO MORE... PANTHER DEVIL!
HE OUGHT TO THANK HIS GODS THAT KILLMONGER FINISHED HIM OFF!
SURE, TAYETE.
I'D'VE MANGLED HIM!
I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO...
...MERCIFUL!
GGHHAARRKK
PERHAPS, THEN, I'LL NOT BE MERCIFUL EITHER.
KAZIBE... TELL ME IT ISN'T TRUE!
THE DEATH REGI-MENTS ARE RIGHT BEHIND US!
YOU'D BEST LET US GO!
SINCE YOU DEMAND IT!
DEATH REGIMENTS?
THEY'LL CERTAINLY BE OF MORE USE THAN EITHER OF YOU!

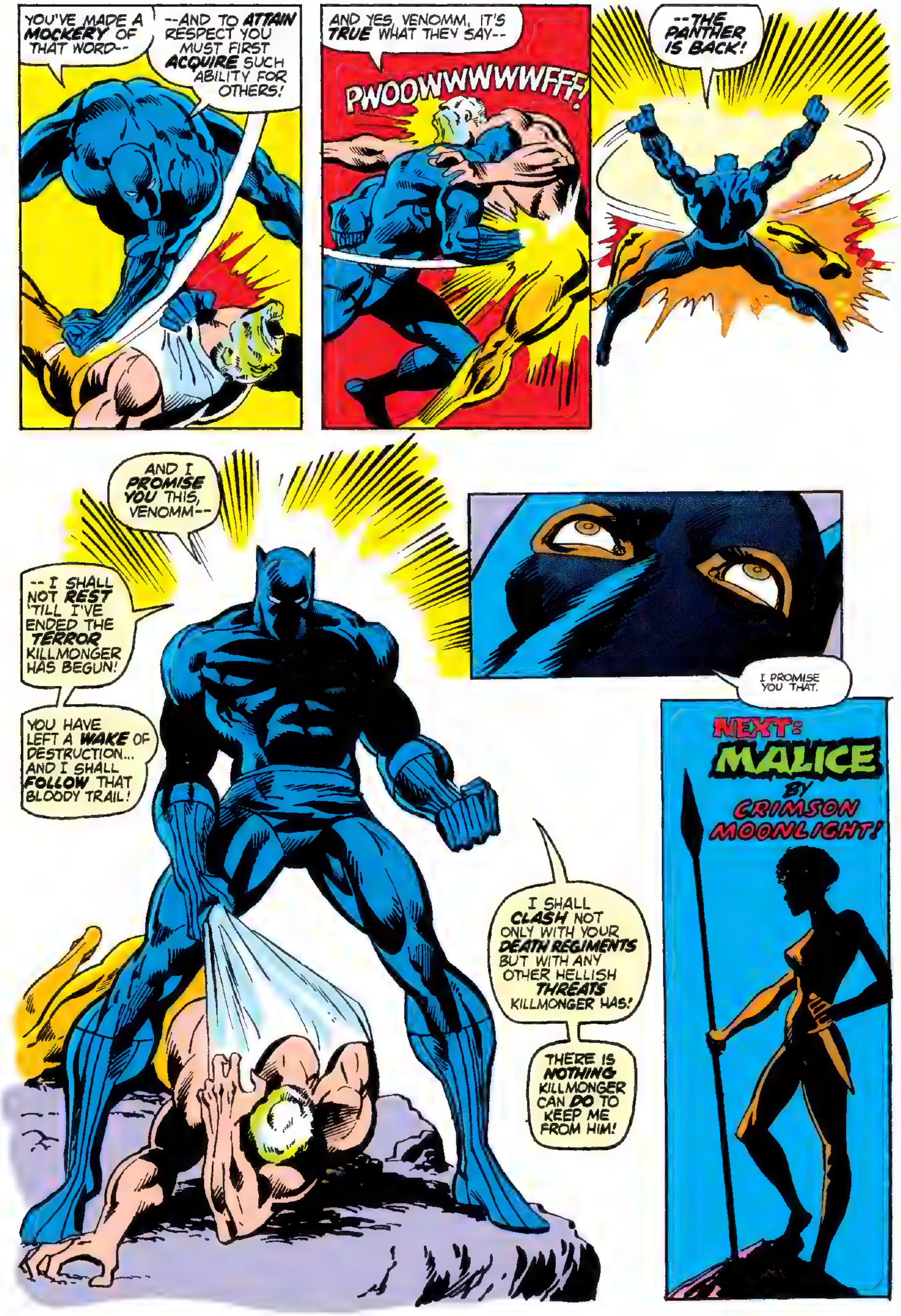
A PRETERNATURAL HUSH DESCENDS OVER THE UNTAMED HIGHLAND--
--AS IF THE MYRIAD JUNGLE LIFE SENSES WITH ANTENNAE, SCENT, AND HIDDEN EYES...THE ESSENCE OF DEATH PASSING BY--
--TERRIFYING SPECTERS THAT TREAD MALEVOLENTLY INTO A SIDE INLET CAUSED BY BLACK WARRIOR FALLS--
--BECOMING INCREASINGLY SPECTRAL AS THE MIST SWALLOWS AND DISTORTS THEIR OMINOUS FORMS!
THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED DEATH REGI-MENTS--
--AND THEIR NAME FITS THEM WELL.
AND THIS IS AN ACT THEY HAVE DONE MANY TIMES--
--EXCEPT THIS TIME--
--THEY ARE NOT ALONE!


DESPITE THE FACT THAT TORN LIGAMENTS AND BRUISED MUSCLES SIGNAL THEIR ACHE--
--THE PANTHER FOLLOWS!
HIS CAT-LIKE EYES REGISTER THE ROCK HEWN WALLS--
--AND A STARTLING PREMONITION TELLS HIM WHERE THIS SHADOW-FRAUGHT PASSAGE LEADS!
THE PANTHER MOVES OUT, MUCH LIKE HIS NAMESAKE--
--AND THOUGH THESE CAVERN WALLS WOULD NORMALLY MAGNIFY ALL SOUND--
--HIS PURSUIT IS ABSOLUTELY SILENT!
BUT AT THE TRAIL'S END, THE SIGHT THAT SEARS HIS EYES--
--IS EVEN MORE STAGGERING THAN HIS EARLIER FEAR!
IT IS AN IMMENSE MINING OPERATION--
--BATHED IN EERIE ILLUMINOSITY, THE VALUABLE ORE STREAKING THROUGH THE STONE WALLS RADIATING A BLUISH OVERCAST!
THE PANTHER KNOWS HE IS DIRECTLY UNDER THE SACRED MOUND OF VIBRANIUM--
--AND THAT ALL THE GUARDS THAT STAND VIGILANCE OVER THIS SUBSTANCE WHICH ABSORBS ALL VIBRATIONS--
-- WILL NEVER REALIZE THAT THE VERY MOUND UPON WHICH THEY STAND--
--IS BEING HOLLOWED OUT BENEATH THEIR FEET!
WHIIIIRRRRRRRRRRRR
CRACK!
AND THEN THERE IS A SINISTER SOUND--JUST BEFORE A DOUBLE-PRONGED BULLWHIP RIPS ABOUT HIS THROAT AND CHEST!


THE PANTHER HAS ONE BLURRED IMAGE OF THE MAN BEHIND HIM, AND KNOWS THIS IS THE CORPSE WHO LEADS THE DEATH REGIMENTS!
ELONGATED, SCALY SERPENTS WRITHE ABOUT HIS BODY; RETRACTILE, FORKED TONGUES DARTING BETWEEN POISONOUS, RECURVED TEETH!
BUT IT IS THE NEARLY PALPABLE HATRED THE PANTHER SENSES MOST--
--HATRED THAT EXPRESSES ITSELF ON A FACE SCARRED SINCE INFANCY!
STATE-SIDE, HE HAD BEEN KNOWN AS HORATIO WALTERS, AND WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, HE THOUGHT THE NAME QUITE POETIC-- UNTIL SCORN AND DERISION KILLED THE POETRY IN HIM!
DURING CHILDHOOD, REJECTION WAS NOT SOMETHING HE COULD UNDERSTAND... AND AS AN ADULT IT BECAME A FORCE HE COULD NOT FACE.
HE SPENT THOSE REMAINING YEARS BUILDING AN IMMUNITY TO THE TOXIC EFFECT OF THESE REPTILES THAT HAVE BECOME AS A SECOND SKIN TO HIM--
--A SECOND, DEADLY SKIN WAITING TO STRIKE!


WELL, LOOK WHAT I CAUGHT ME HERE!
KILLMONGER SAID WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY 'BOUT YOU LURKIN' AROUND ANY MORE--
--AND HE MIGHTA BEEN WRONG ON THAT ACCOUNT--
--BUT HE WON'T BE WRONG MUCH LONGER!
GUESS AGAIN, FRIEND!
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE.
WHAT YOU DID JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE!
JUST AS YOU AREN'T A WALKING CORPSE AS MY LOOK-OUTS REPORTED-- THOUGH I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND HOW THEY MIGHT THINK SUCH!
PEOPLE BEEN CALLIN' ME A SIDESHOW FREAK SINCE I CAN REMEMBER--
'CEPT NOW, I CAN STRIKE BACK!
THE NAME'S VENOMM, PANTHER--
--AND AS MY "PET'S" FANGS STRIKE--
--REMEMBER THAT NAME-- REMEMBER IT AS YOU SLOWLY DIE!
TWISTING AGILELY TO AVOID THE DEADLY LUNGE--
--THE PANTHER FEELS THE LEDGE CRUMBLE BENEATH HIS FEET!
NO AMOUNT OF ACROBATICS WILL HELP SURVIVE THIS FALL!


YOU JUST KEEP ON SURPRIZIN' ME!
KILLMONGER DIDN'T EXAGGERATE A BIT ABOUT YOU!
BUT THERE'S NOTHIN' LEFT TO GRAB ONTO AFTER THIS EDGE--!
YOU CAN TWIST YOURSELF INTO A PRET-ZEL--
BUT IT WON'T DO YOU A BIT 'A GOOD!
YOU'RE A REAL DEAD MAN THIS TIME, PANTHER!
VENOMM'S WORDS RICOCHET HAUNTINGLY OFF THE CAVERN WALLS--
--AND THEN, THE PANTHER DOES WHAT FEW OTHER MEN WOULD EVER DARE ATTEMPT!
HE LETS HIS FREE HAND SWING AWAY FROM HIS LIFE-HOLD--
--AND FOR AN IMMENSE THREE SECONDS IS HELD FROM DEATH BY THE BOOT OF THE MAN THAT INTENDS TO KILL HIM!
AND BEFORE VENOMM CAN LIFT THAT FOOT, AND LET THE ENEMY SPLATTER UPON THE STALAGMITES BELOW--
--THE PANTHER HAS REVERSED POSITIONS!
DON'T BE AFRAID OF DYING JUST YET, VENOMM--
--THOUGH YOU MIGHT WELL WISH YOU HAD BY THE TIME I'M FINISHED WITH YOU!
I WON'T LET YOU STEAL KILLMONGER'S PROMISE!
I WON'T LET YOU STEAL MY CHANCE FOR RESPECT!
RESPECT!
SPEAK NOT TO ME OF RESPECT!



YOU'VE MADE A MOCKERY OF THAT WORD--
--AND TO ATTAIN RESPECT YOU MUST FIRST ACQUIRE SUCH ABILITY FOR OTHERS!
AND YES, VENOMM, IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY--
PWOOWWWWWFFF!
--THE PANTHER IS BACK!
AND I PROMISE YOU THIS, VENOMM--
-- I SHALL NOT REST 'TILL I'VE ENDED THE TERROR KILLMONGER HAS BEGUN!
YOU HAVE LEFT A WAKE OF DESTRUCTION... AND I SHALL FOLLOW THAT BLOODY TRAIL!
I SHALL CLASH NOT ONLY WITH YOUR DEATH REGIMENTS BUT WITH ANY OTHER HELLISH THREATS KILLMONGER HAS!
THERE IS NOTHING KILLMONGER CAN DO TO KEEP ME FROM HIM!
I PROMISE YOU THAT.
NEXT: MALICE BY CRIMSON MOONLIGHT!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

A Special Message from the Bullpen:
DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO WAKANDA?

Suppose you're an editorial assistant, just sitting there one day, proofing an issue of COMBAT KELLY or arguing with the production department about how many "D's" there are on Daredevil's costume, when a certain bright-eyed, blond-haired editor named ROY THOMAS walks into your office and says, "We've decided to do an all-original BLACK PANTHER strip in JUNGLE ACTION."

You react with instant enthusiasm. "Great," you say, "the Panther has always deserved a series of his own!"

Then the editor drops the bomb. "Oh, by the way. . .you're going to write it. And we need a synopsis tomorrow."

Before you can pick your lower jaw up from the floor, Roy has disappeared into that much-hallowed sanctum known as "Stan's office", having left you with the not inconsiderable task of creating an African nation—overnight. Out of your head! With only a few issues of FANTASTIC FOUR and THE AVENGERS to draw on for guidance. What do you do?

If you're DON McGREGOR and RICH BUCKLER, you do what has been done in this issue and its predecessor of JUNGLE ACTION. You let your imagination run wild. You take what was basically a sidelight idea—the super-technological nation of Wakanda co-existing anachronistically with the primitive jungle—and you develop it into a full-blown culture with its own social structure, history and mythology, its own morés, taboos and values.

You ask yourself, what kind of geography and people surround a paradoxical wonderland like that? And you begin to develop notions about what kind of tribes and individuals would comprise Wakanda's friends—and foes. Which, in turn, leads you to malevolent menaces like Killmonger and Venomm. And so on. And on. And on. Once the creative wheels start spinning as they have with this new series, they're hard to stop. And so you'll be seeing more of Wakanda in each and every episode of this precedent-shattering series.

Why precedent-shattering? Because of who the hero happens to be. Not an abandoned child raised by apes or lions or armadillos or whatever. Not an accidental visitor to this jungle paradise—but its king; not one of the restless natives of B-movie fame, but a man who has a logical reason to be there. . .because he was born there!

THE BLACK PANTHER.

T'Challa, king of the Wakandan nation, heir to its land, son of its mythos and its past, guardian of its future. Perhaps the first jungle hero who's not a foreign import. And that's one precedent which badly needed shattering.

T'Challa. Regal, sophisticated, even urbane—yet part of the world that birthed him, the diametrical opposite of the pulp-magazine white-man-or-woman-gone-wild-syndrome. T'Challa and his people are black men who have abandoned their roles as spear-carriers and safari boys to take up the tools of technology and use them to preserve and protect, rather than exploit, the continent called Africa.

You gotta admit: it's more than a little intriguing.

And these first two issues are only the beginning. Don and Rich are working closely together. Don hanging over Rich's drawing board, Rich peering over Don's shoulder at the typewriter, to make THE BLACK PANTHER one of the most unusual and interesting series of the seventies. KLAUS JANSON, Marvels newest inker, hovers over both of them like some demented, starved vulture, wondering if *they'll* ever be satisfied enough to pass pages into *his* hands. And Stan, Roy and the rest of the Marvel Bullpen are pretty proud of the nation these two have created overnight.

But now it's up to you. To put it crassly, if you don't buy it, we don't get to produce it anymore. And if you don't write all kinds of letters about it, we'll never know if you like it or not.

Thus, a pair of requests:

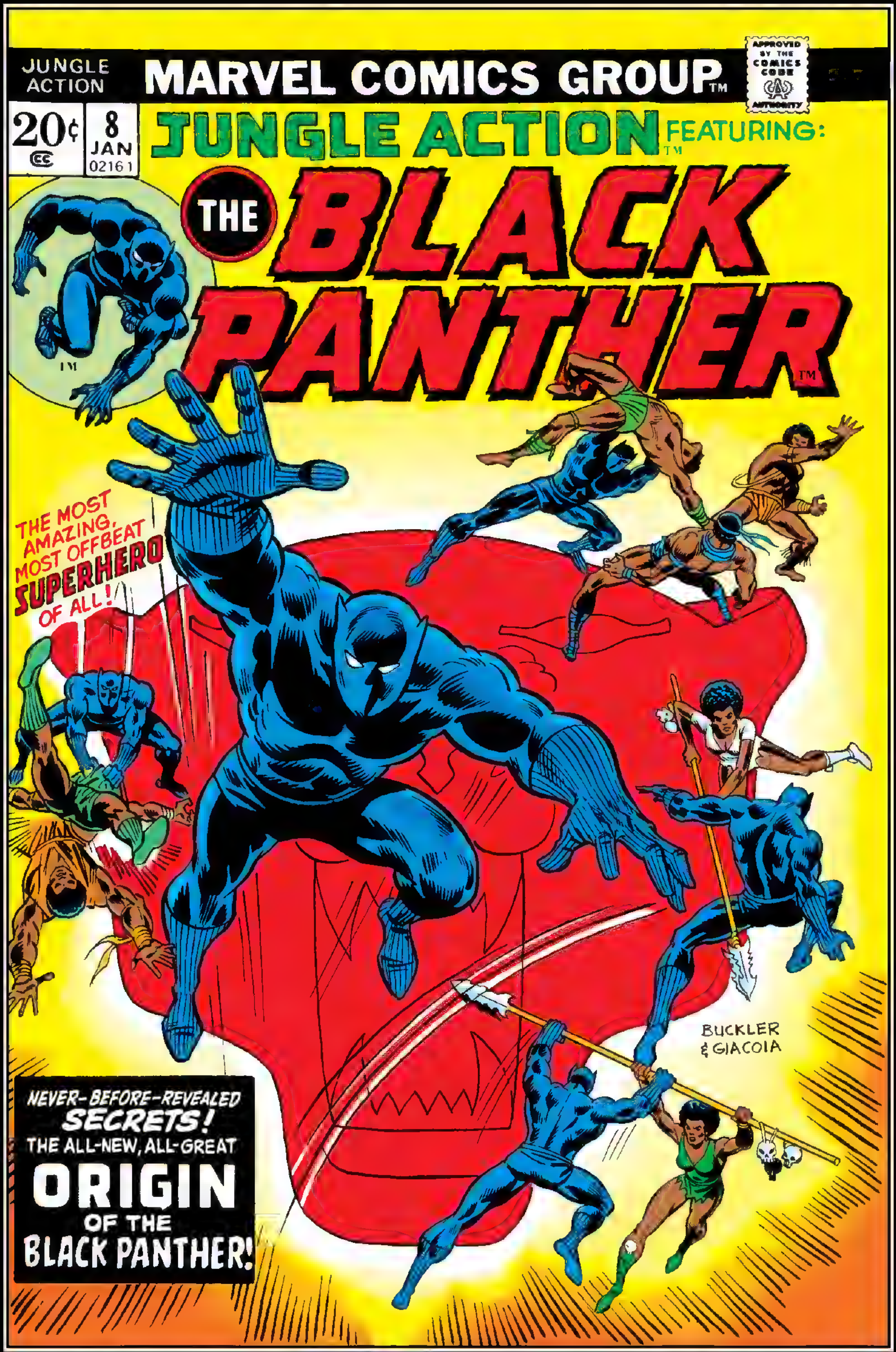
Put two dimes away in a very special place every two months, and please use them to share with us the Black Panther's adventures.

And put pencil, pen, typewriter, or even crayon to paper and tell us what you think of what we've done.

In return, we hereby pledge to knock you outta your gourd with some of the wildest jungle adventures ever to see print in the pages of a comic magazine. Fair 'nuff? Then, in the immortal words of some bygone yippie philosopher—DO IT!

For Stan, Roy, Don, Rich & the Bullpen
Sincerely,
Steve Gerber

WATCH FOR THE EXCITING *NEW* SURPRISES FROM *THE HOUSE OF IDEAS,* AS *MIGHTY MARVEL MOVES AHEAD!*



JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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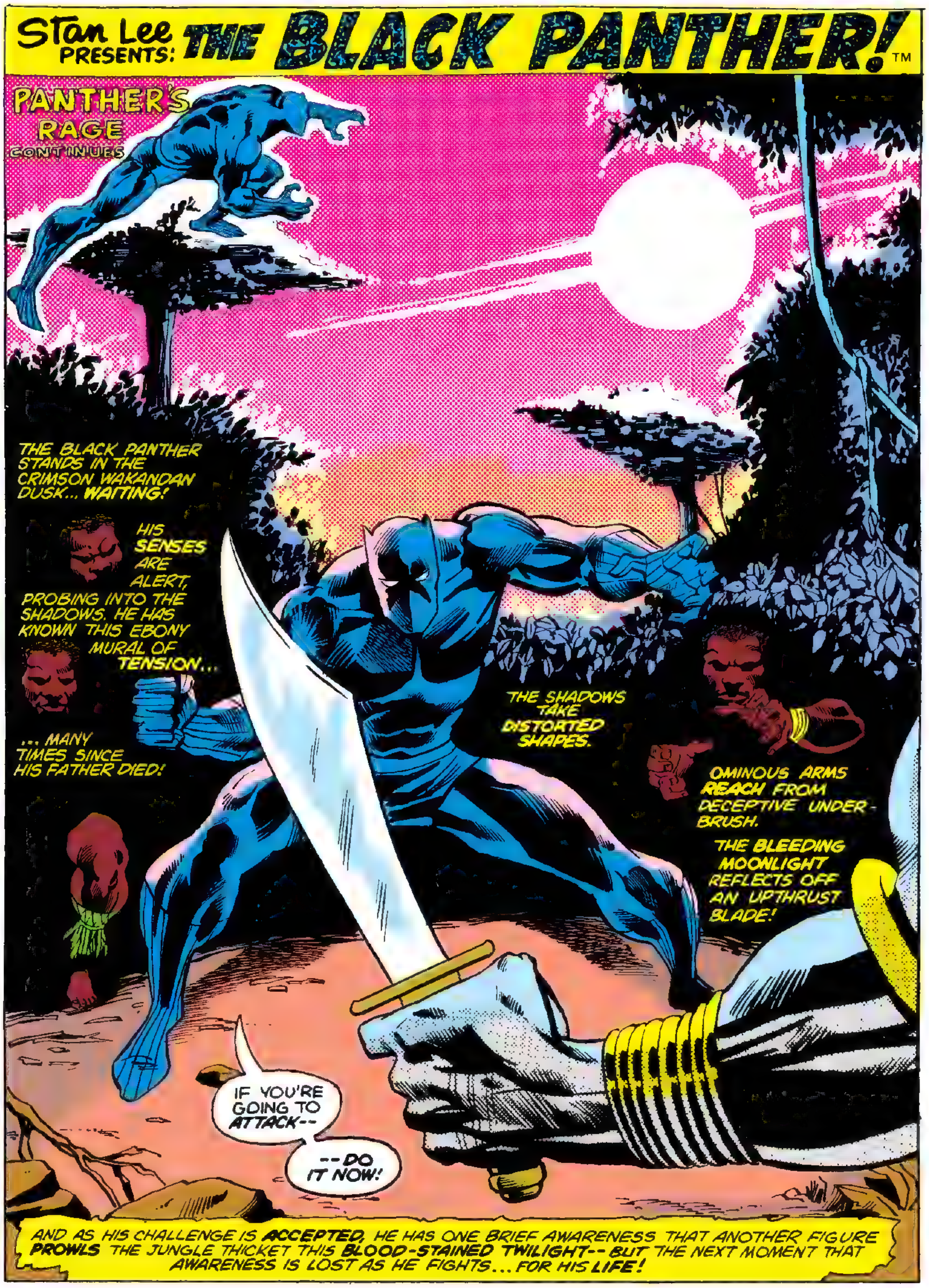
JUNGLE ACTION
FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
THE MOST AMAZING, MOST OFFBEAT SUPERHERO OF ALL!
NEVER-BEFORE-REVEALED SECRETS!
THE ALL-NEW, ALL-GREAT
ORIGIN
OF THE
BLACK PANTHER!
BUCKLER & GIACOIA

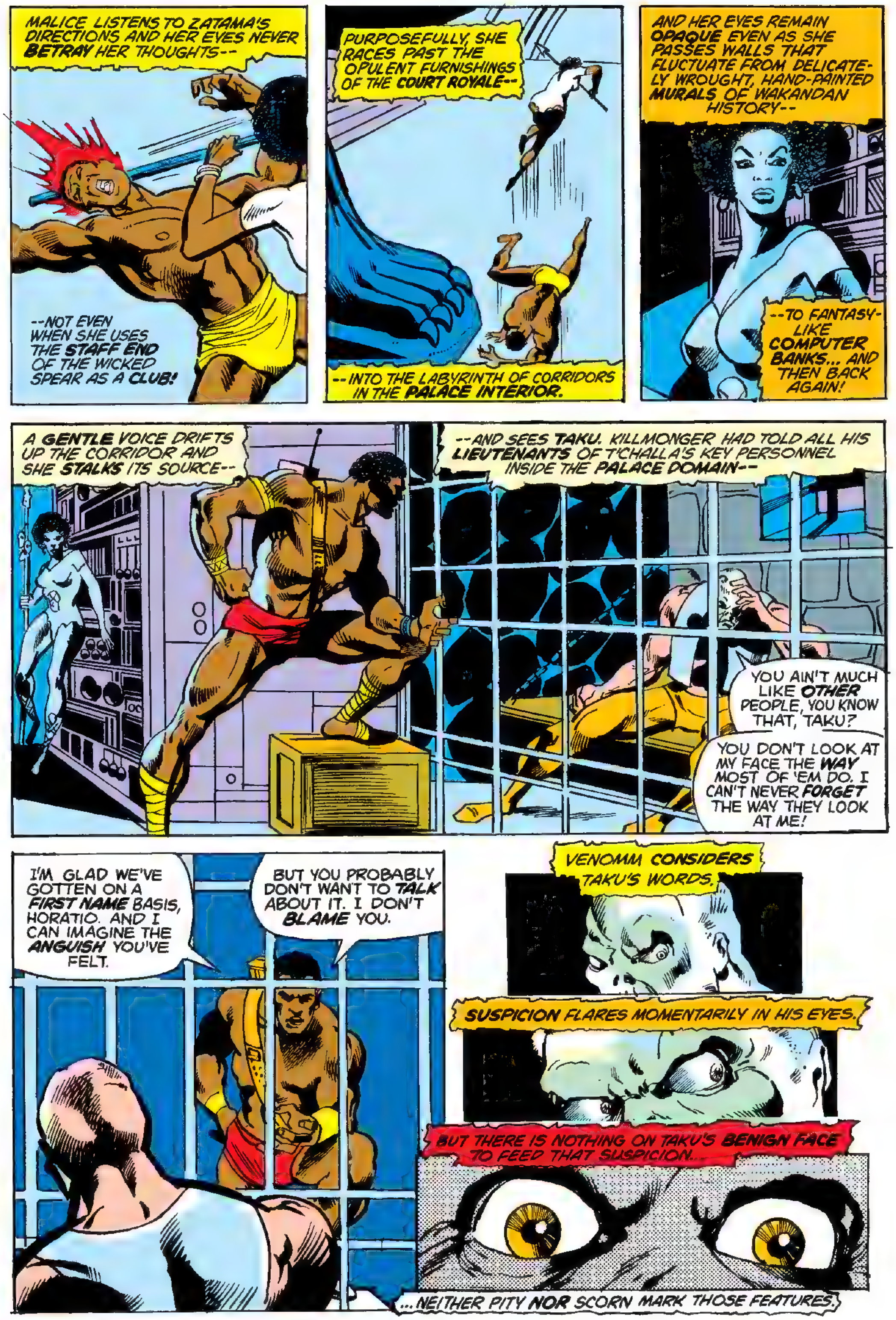

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES
THE BLACK PANTHER STANDS IN THE CRIMSON WAKANDAN DUSK... WAITING!
HIS SENSES ARE ALERT, PROBING INTO THE SHADOWS. HE HAS KNOWN THIS EBONY MURAL OF TENSION...
...MANY TIMES SINCE HIS FATHER DIED!
THE SHADOWS TAKE DISTORTED SHAPES.
OMINOUS ARMS REACH FROM DECEPTIVE UNDER-BRUSH.
THE BLEEDING MOONLIGHT REFLECTS OFF AN UPTHRUST BLADE!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO ATTACK--
--DO IT NOW!
AND AS HIS CHALLENGE IS ACCEPTED, HE HAS ONE BRIEF AWARENESS THAT ANOTHER FIGURE PROWLS THE JUNGLE THICKET THIS BLOOD-STAINED TWILIGHT-- BUT THE NEXT MOMENT THAT AWARENESS IS LOST AS HE FIGHTS... FOR HIS LIFE!

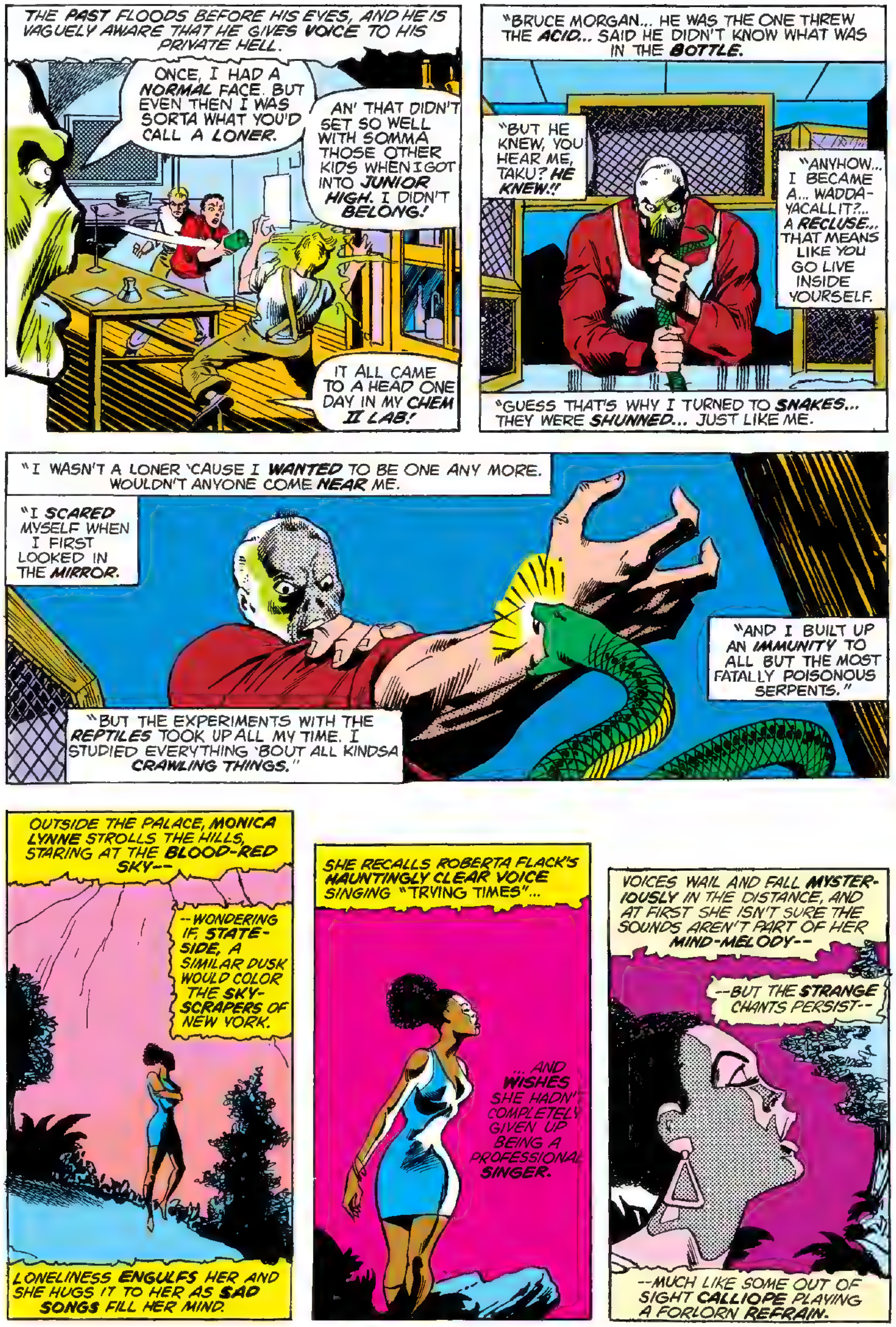
DON McGREGOR/WRITER RICH BUCKLER AND KLAUS JANSON/ARTISTS TOM ORZECHOWSKI/LETTERING GLYNIS WEIN/COLORIST ROY THOMAS/EDITOR

THE AIR IS HUMID IN WAKANDA WILTING THE MULTI-COLORED LEAFAGE--
--AND THE CRIMSON MOONLIGHT SEEMS TO HOLD ON TO THE SMOTHERING HEAT OF DAY--GLARING DOWN ON THE VIOLENCE THAT ERUPTS TWO-SCALE WITHIN THE PALACE ROYAL WALLS AND AT CENTRAL WAKANDA'S OUTER LIMITS, TORMENT FOREST!
THE PANTHER'S EYES BLAZE CAT-LIKE.. HIS EARS CATCH EACH SLITHERING SOUND--
--AND HE STRIKES, PERFECTLY BALANCED, THOUGH HE HAS BARELY RECOVERED FROM WOUNDS SUSTAINED BUT TWO WEEKS EARLIER!
KRADADA, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT GOT ME INTO THIS MESS!
REMIND ME OF THAT IF WE GET OUT OF HERE IN ONE PIECE--
--OR ANY OTHER WAY!
ZATAMA HAS NEVER KNOWN ANY DANGER WITHIN THE COURTLY WALLS OF THE PALACE...
BUT HE LOOKS UP INTO ONYX-BLACK EYES AND WOULD HAVE KNOWN DANGER WAS THERE EVEN IF THE TRIDENT-TIPPED SPEAR DID NOT PUNCTURE THE SOFT TISSUE OF HIS THROAT!
YOU'D LIKE TO GO ON BREATHING?
RIGHT?
Y... YES
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
YOU GIVE ME ONE WRONG ANSWER... ONLY ONE... AND IT'S THE LAST ANSWER YOU'LL GIVE ANYONE.
YOU UNDERSTAND?
I... I UNDERSTAND. WH.. WHO ARE YOU?

AS THE FIGURE OF KRADADA HURTLES OVER HIS SHOULDERS, THE PANTHER REMEMBERS N'BAZA... REMEMBERS THE DISTRUST HE ONCE FELT FOR THAT MAN UNTIL THE RITUALS WERE EXPLAINED TO HIM--
--AND HE ALSO REMEMBERS THAT N'BAZA IS DEAD, REMEMBERS THAT HIS FATHER IS DEAD...
...AND DEATH RUSHES IN UPON HIM, A WRAITH-LIKE REALITY HE CANNOT CONQUER.
I'M NOT GETTING MIXED UP IN THIS!
BUT YOU ALREADY ARE, MY FRIEND!
YOU ALREADY ARE!
HIS WORDS ARE HARSH WITH EMOTION... VISIONS OF A SLAUGHTERED FISHING COLONY MINGLE WITH THAT OF ONE LONE NAMELESS OLD MAN DYING IN HIS ARMS...
...AND HE KICKS OUT NOT AT THE FIGURE BEFORE HIM... BUT AT KILLMONGER... KILLMONGER, WHO HAS CAUSED ALL THIS WANTON DEATH!
THE NAME'S MALICE!
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT NAME MEANS?
YE... YES
YOU'VE GOT ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS SO FAR. KEEP IT UP AND YOU MIGHT EVEN SEE MORNING'S LIGHT.
KILLMONGER SENT ME HERE
--BUT YOU PROBABLY GUESSED--
WHAT KILLMONGER DOESN'T LIKE IS THAT T'CHALLA GOT LUCKY AND CAPTURED ONE OF HIS LIEUTENANTS--VENOMM!
I WANT TO KNOW WHERE HE IS-- AND I WANT TO KNOW NOW!

MENDINAO HAS BEEN A HERBALIST MOST OF HIS LIFE--
--LEARNING THE COMPLEX ART ACQUIRED BY EARLIER GENERATIONS OF HIS FAMILY.
HE HAS WATCHED THE KING OF THE WAKANDAS GO THROUGH THESE RITES BEFORE--
--WHILE THE FORBIDDEN, HEART-SHAPED HERBS SIMMER INTO A SYRUPY PULP.
HE FARES MUCH BETTER THAN I'D THOUGHT HE WOULD, MENDINAO.
THEN YOUR EYES SEE NOT WELL AT ALL, W'KABI.
MENDINAO'S EYES SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING.
HE FIGHTS WITH AN INNER RAGE THAT MAKES HIM SEE GHOSTS. HE USES THE TESTS TO RELEASE ALL THE TENSION IN HIM.
THERE WAS A DAY WHEN HE WOULD HAVE KEPT EVERYTHING IN CONTROL.
EVEN ANGER WOULD STAY WHERE HE COULD USE IT TO HIS ADVANTAGE!
PERHAPS THAT'S BECAUSE HE HAS SPENT SO MUCH TIME OF LATE WITH OUT-WORLDERS.
W'KABI, FOR THE HEAD OF COURT SECURITY, YOUR MOUTH HAS A TONGUE WITH KNOTS TIED IN IT.
STAY YOUR HAND, T'CHALLA, MY CHIEFTAIN...
...THE PHYSICAL TESTS ARE AT AN END!
THE BOILING JUICE EXTRACTS FROM THE HEART-SHAPED HERB ARE READY...
MENDINAO, TRUSTED FRIEND.. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MOMENT WHEN I NEEDED THE SACRED PANTHER POWERS MORE!
I AM READY.

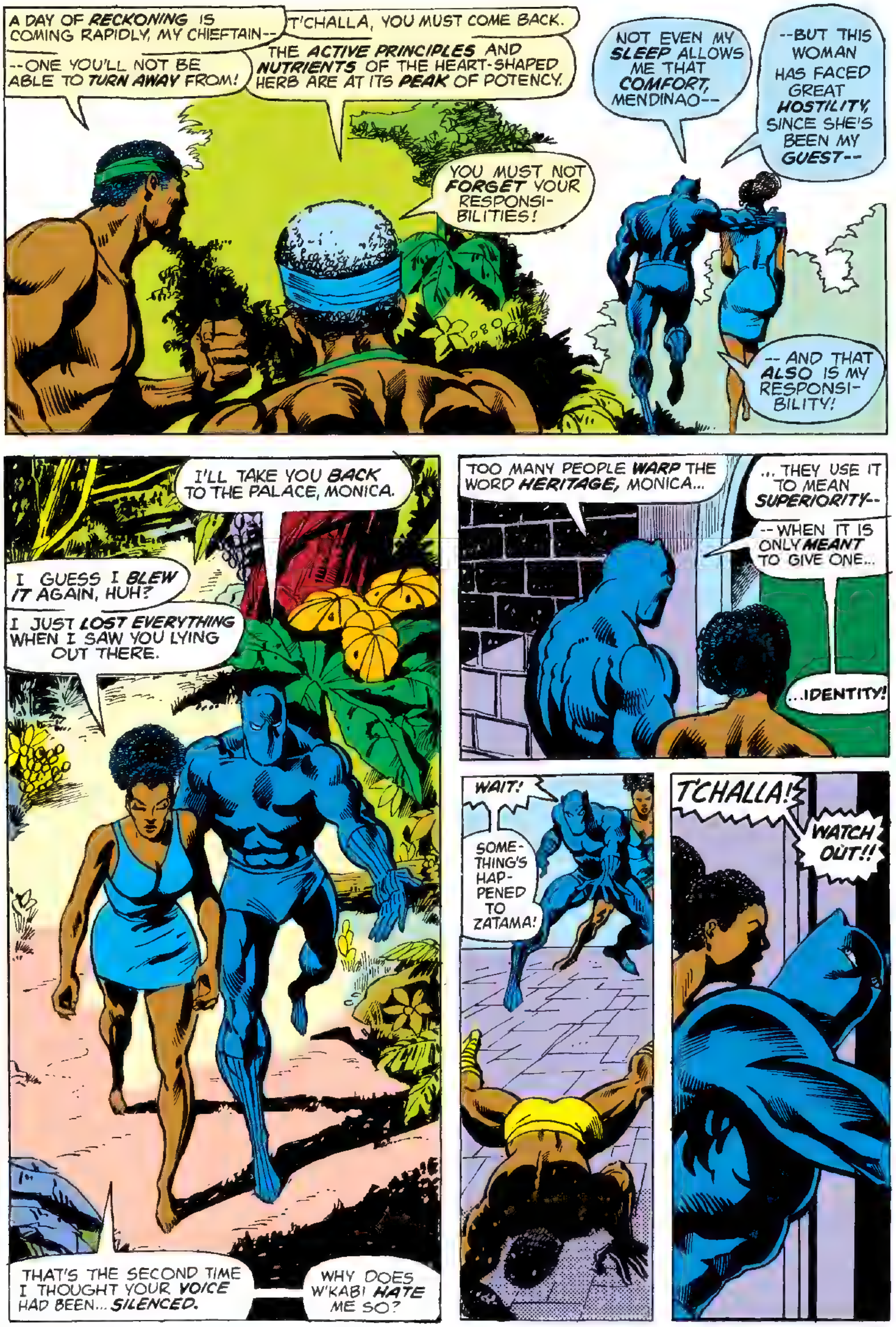

MALICE LISTENS TO ZATAMA'S DIRECTIONS AND HER EYES NEVER BETRAY HER THOUGHTS--
--NOT EVEN WHEN SHE USES THE STAFF END OF THE WICKED SPEAR AS A CLUB!
PURPOSEFULLY, SHE RACES PAST THE OPULENT FURNISHINGS OF THE COURT ROYALE--
--INTO THE LABYRINTH OF CORRIDORS IN THE PALACE INTERIOR.
AND HER EYES REMAIN OPAQUE EVEN AS SHE PASSES WALLS THAT FLUCTUATE FROM DELICATELY WROUGHT, HAND-PAINTED MURALS OF WAKANDAN HISTORY--
--TO FANTASY-LIKE COMPUTER BANKS... AND THEN BACK AGAIN!
A GENTLE VOICE DRIFTS UP THE CORRIDOR AND SHE STALKS ITS SOURCE--
--AND SEES TAKU. KILLMONGER HAD TOLD ALL HIS LIEUTENANTS OF T'CHALLA'S KEY PERSONNEL INSIDE THE PALACE DOMAIN--
YOU AIN'T MUCH LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, YOU KNOW THAT, TAKU?
YOU DON'T LOOK AT MY FACE THE WAY MOST OF 'EM DO. I CAN'T NEVER FORGET THE WAY THEY LOOK AT ME!
I'M GLAD WE'VE GOTTEN ON A FIRST NAME BASIS, HORATIO. AND I CAN IMAGINE THE ANGUISH YOU'VE FELT.
BUT YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT. I DON'T BLAME YOU.
VENOMM CONSIDERS TAKU'S WORDS.
SUSPICION FLARES MOMENTARILY IN HIS EYES.
BUT THERE IS NOTHING ON TAKU'S BENIGN FACE TO FEED THAT SUSPICION...
...NEITHER PITY NOR SCORN MARK THOSE FEATURES.

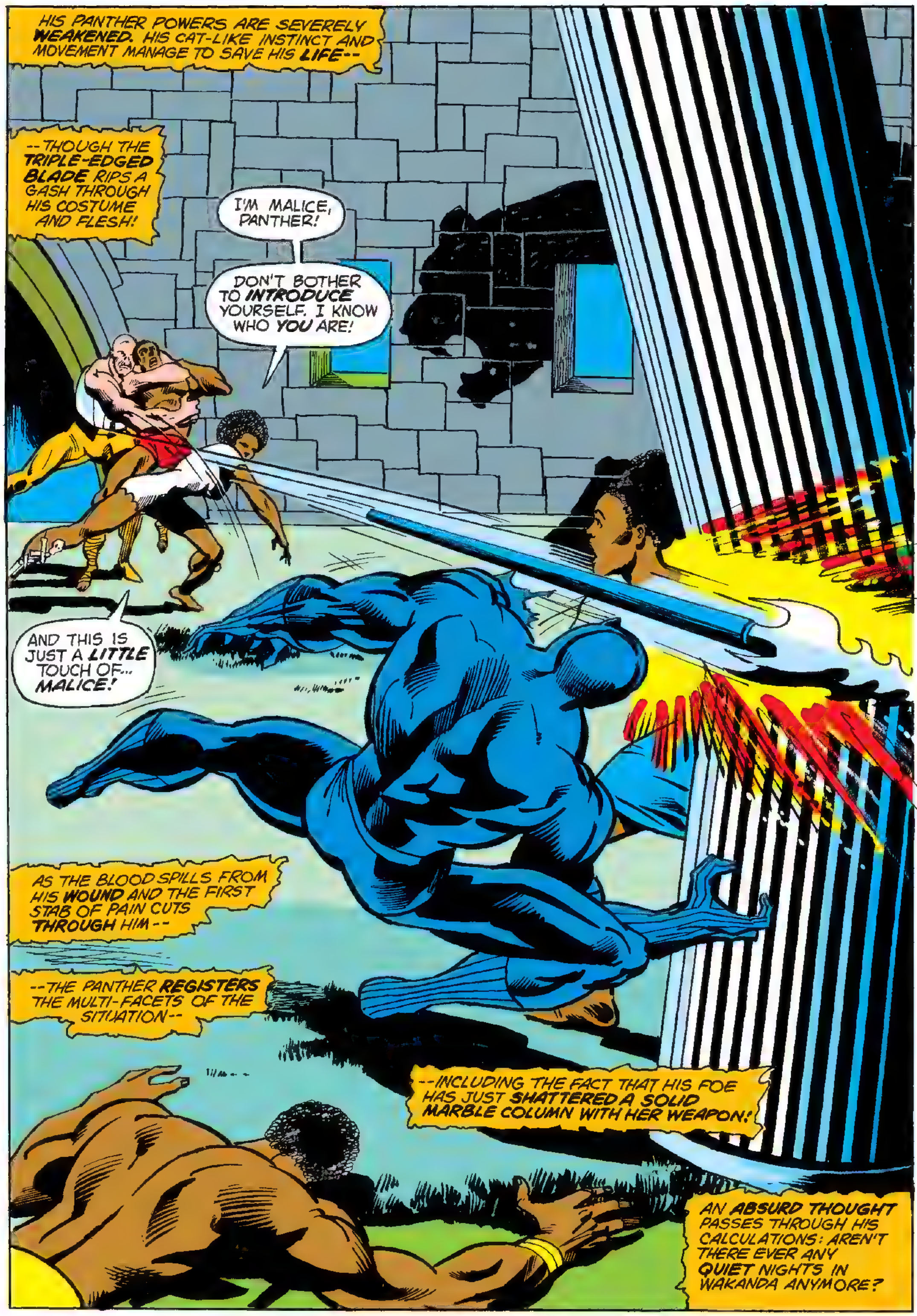


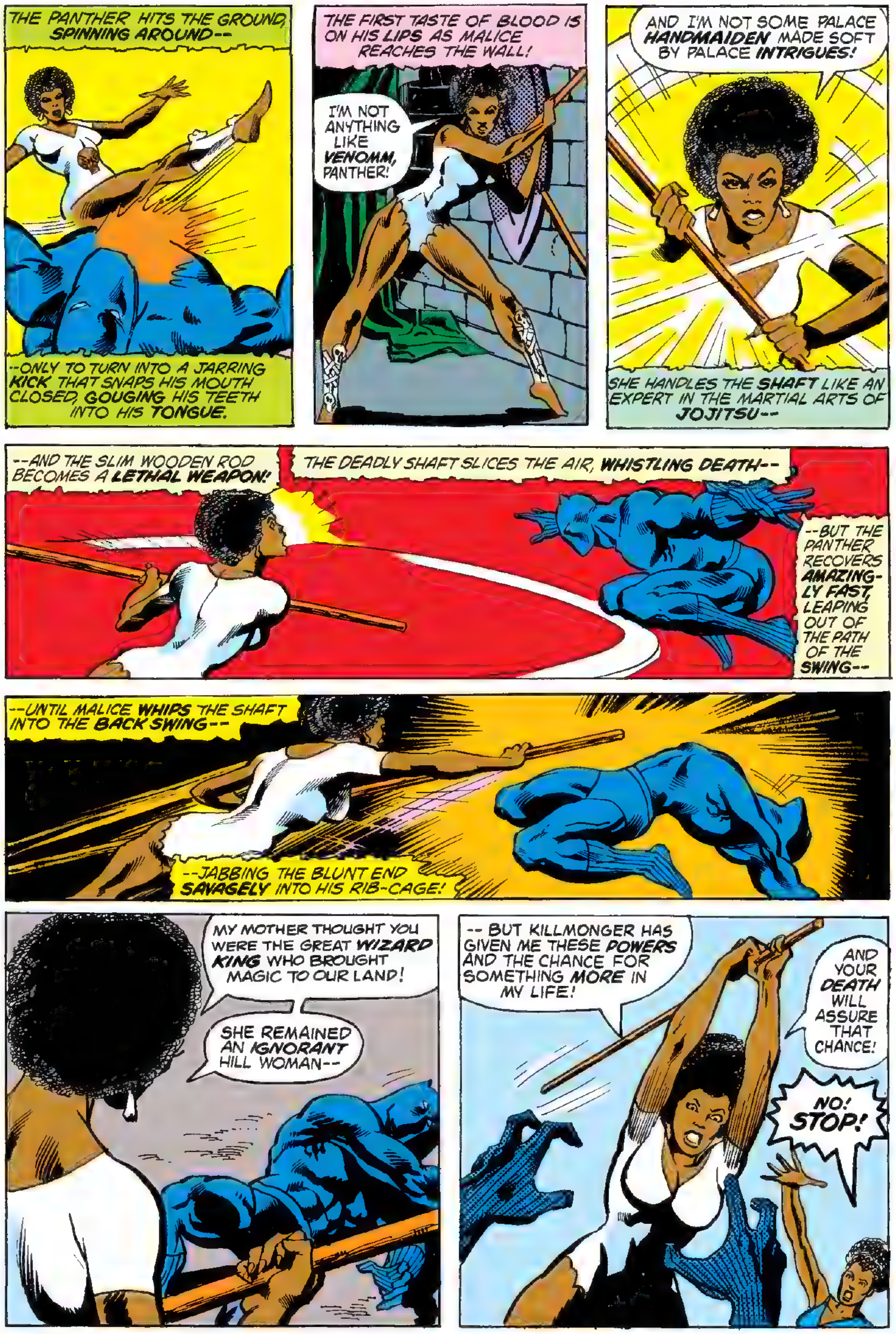
THE PAST FLOODS BEFORE HIS EYES, AND HE IS VAGUELY AWARE THAT HE GIVES VOICE TO HIS PRIVATE HELL.
ONCE, I HAD A NORMAL FACE. BUT EVEN THEN I WAS SORTA WHAT YOU'D CALL A LONER.
AN' THAT DIDN'T SET SO WELL WITH SOMMA THOSE OTHER KIDS WHEN I GOT INTO JUNIOR HIGH. I DIDN'T BELONG!
IT ALL CAME TO A HEAD ONE DAY IN MY CHEM II LAB!
"BRUCE MORGAN... HE WAS THE ONE THREW THE ACID... SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS IN THE BOTTLE.
"BUT HE KNEW, YOU HEAR ME, TAKU? HE KNEW!!
"ANYHOW... I BECAME A... WADDA-YACALLIT?... A RECLUSE... THAT MEANS LIKE YOU GO LIVE INSIDE YOURSELF.
"GUESS THAT'S WHY I TURNED TO SNAKES... THEY WERE SHUNNED... JUST LIKE ME.
"I WASN'T A LONER 'CAUSE I WANTED TO BE ONE ANY MORE. WOULDN'T ANYONE COME NEAR ME.
"I SCARED MYSELF WHEN I FIRST LOOKED IN THE MIRROR.
"AND I BUILT UP AN IMMUNITY TO ALL BUT THE MOST FATALLY POISONOUS SERPENTS."
"BUT THE EXPERIMENTS WITH THE REPTILES TOOK UP ALL MY TIME. I STUDIED EVERYTHING 'BOUT ALL KINDSA CRAWLING THINGS."
OUTSIDE THE PALACE, MONICA LYNNE STROLLS THE HILLS, STARING AT THE BLOOD-RED SKY--
--WONDERING IF, STATE-SIDE, A SIMILAR DUSK WOULD COLOR THE SKY-SCRAPERS OF NEW YORK.
LONELINESS ENGULFS HER AND SHE HUGS IT TO HER AS SAD SONGS FILL HER MIND.
SHE RECALLS ROBERTA FLACK'S HAUNTINGLY CLEAR VOICE SINGING "TRYING TIMES"...
...AND WISHES SHE HADN'T COMPLETELY GIVEN UP BEING A PROFESSIONAL SINGER.
VOICES WAIL AND FALL MYSTERIOUSLY IN THE DISTANCE, AND AT FIRST SHE ISN'T SURE THE SOUNDS AREN'T PART OF HER MIND-MELODY--
--BUT THE STRANGE CHANTS PERSIST--
--MUCH LIKE SOME OUT OF SIGHT CALLIOPE PLAYING A FORLORN REFRAIN.

MALICE'S HAND TIGHTENS ONTO HER WEAPON AS TAKU PATIENTLY URGES VENOMM TO CONTINUE.
SHE OUGHT TO KILL THE LOQUACIOUS, CORPSE-FLESHED FIGURE INSTEAD OF FREEING HIM!
YOU ATTENDED A UNIVERSITY?
"NAH! TOOK SOME NIGHT COURSES IN BIOLOGY. 'BOUT THE ONLY THING I WAS GOOD AT.
"THAT'S WHERE I MET KILL-MONGER... ONE NIGHT WHEN THIS RADICAL GROUP DECIDED TO TEACH "THE FREAK" A LESSON--
"KILLMONGER... HE CALLED HIM-SELF N'JADAKA, BACK THEN--- COME FROM NOWHERE!
"YOU NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT, TAKU.
"YOU SHOULDA SEEN 'IM TAKE THEM GUYS ON! HE WASTED 'EM WITHOUT WORKIN' UP A SWEAT.
"KILLMONGER WAS AN OUTCAST, TOO... AND BITTER LIKE AN ALMOND.
"HE SAID HE COULD USE ME, SOME DAY... AND I'LL NEVER FORGET THE OTHER WORDS HE SAID THAT NIGHT.
ONE DAY, HORATIO, I WILL TAKE YOU TO A PLACE BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION--
--AND WE WILL TAKE THAT PLACE BY FORCE--
--AND MAKE IT OURS!
MONICA COMES UPON THE CLEARING. THE CHANTS HAVE TAKEN ON A STRANGE INTENSITY SHE CANNOT UNDERSTAND--
--AND OMINOUS FIGURES CROWD AROUND A DARK HELPLESS FIGURE SHE RECOGNIZES AS...
T'CHALLA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HIM?

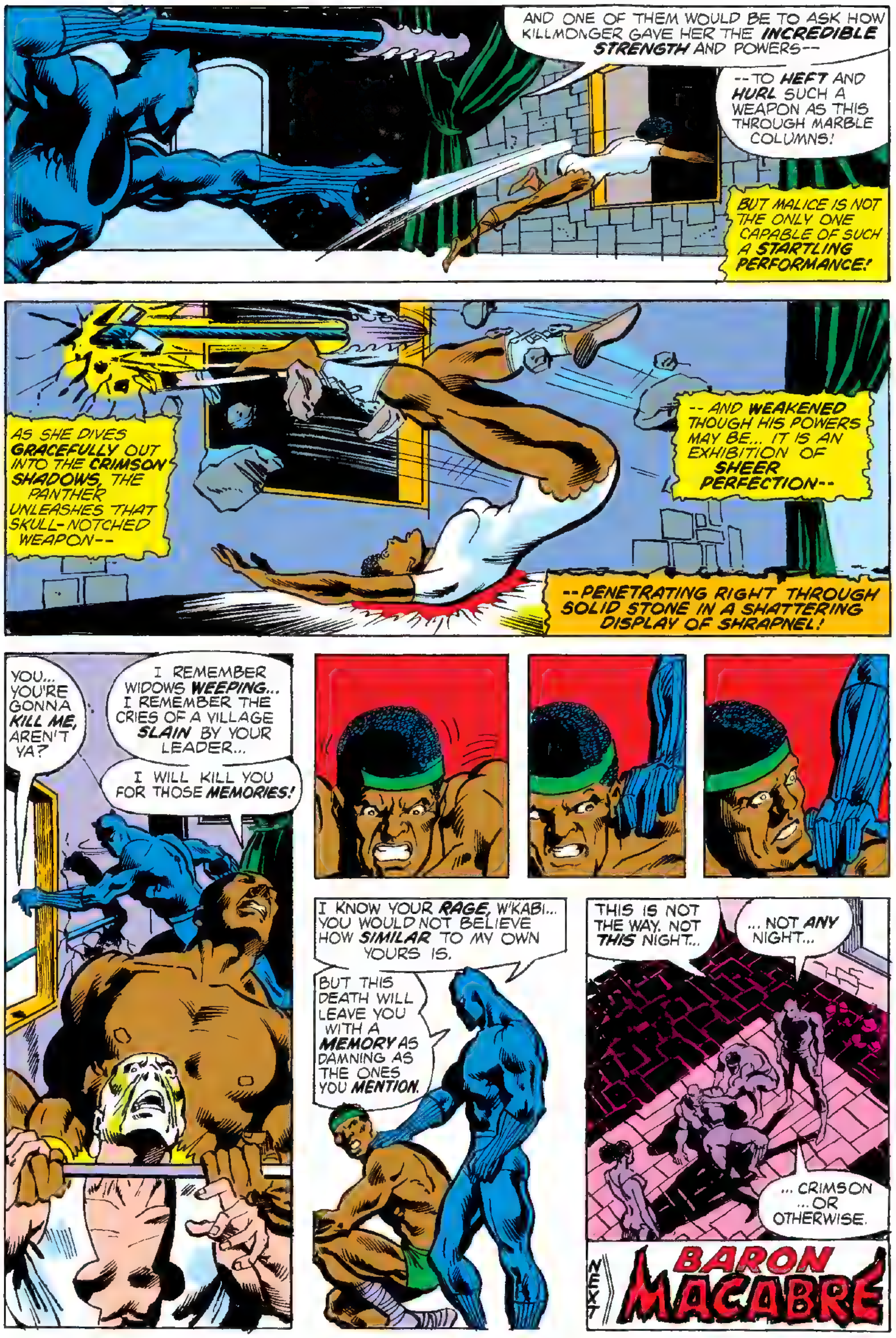
W'KABI!!
I KNEW YOUR SOUL WAS BITTER... BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D TAKE PART IN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!
KEEP BACK!
YOU MUST NOT ENTER THE SACROSANCT CIRCLE--
--NOT NOW AT THE RITUAL'S MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT!
FORGET IT, WITCH-DOCTOR!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, W'KABI? HASN'T T'CHALLA BLED ENOUGH FOR YOU SINCE HE'S COME BACK?
ARE YOU RUNNING WITH KILLMONGER'S PACK NOW?
THAT'S THE FINAL INDIGNITY, OUT-WORLDER!
YOUR VERY PRESENCE PROFANES THIS CEREMONY!
W'KABI-- I'LL TELL YOU BUT ONCE--
--TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF MISS LYNNE!
T'CHALLA! YOU... YOU'RE ABLE TO MOVE!
MY CHIEFTAIN, CERTAINLY YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DEFEND THESE ACTIONS.
YOU SAW WHAT SHE DID TO MENDINAO--AND YET YOU THREATEN ME!
MENDINAO... MY FRIEND... I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT I MUST DO NEXT...
... AND THAT MY DECISION WAS NOT AN EASY ONE. WE MUST DISCONTINUE THE RITUALS.
COME, MONICA.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS...
... ANY OF IT!


A DAY OF RECKONING IS COMING RAPIDLY, MY CHIEFTAIN--
--ONE YOU'LL NOT BE ABLE TO TURN AWAY FROM!
T'CHALLA, YOU MUST COME BACK.
THE ACTIVE PRINCIPLES AND NUTRIENTS OF THE HEART-SHAPED HERB ARE AT ITS PEAK OF POTENCY.
YOU MUST NOT FORGET YOUR RESPONSI-BILITIES!
NOT EVEN MY SLEEP ALLOWS ME THAT COMFORT, MENDINAO--
--BUT THIS WOMAN HAS FACED GREAT HOSTILITY SINCE SHE'S BEEN MY GUEST--
-- AND THAT ALSO IS MY RESPONSI-BILITY!
I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO THE PALACE, MONICA.
I GUESS I BLEW IT AGAIN, HUH?
I JUST LOST EVERYTHING WHEN I SAW YOU LYING OUT THERE.
THAT'S THE SECOND TIME I THOUGHT YOUR VOICE HAD BEEN... SILENCED.
WHY DOES W'KABI HATE ME SO?
TOO MANY PEOPLE WARP THE WORD HERITAGE, MONICA...
... THEY USE IT TO MEAN SUPERIORITY--
--WHEN IT IS ONLY MEANT TO GIVE ONE...
...IDENTITY!
WAIT!
SOME-THING'S HAP-PENED TO ZATAMA!
T'CHALLA!
WATCH OUT!!


HIS PANTHER POWERS ARE SEVERELY WEAKENED. HIS CAT-LIKE INSTINCT AND MOVEMENT MANAGE TO SAVE HIS LIFE--
--THOUGH THE TRIPLE-EDGED BLADE RIPS A GASH THROUGH HIS COSTUME AND FLESH!
I'M MALICE, PANTHER!
DON'T BOTHER TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
AND THIS IS JUST A LITTLE TOUCH OF... MALICE!
AS THE BLOOD SPILLS FROM HIS WOUND AND THE FIRST STAB OF PAIN CUTS THROUGH HIM--
--THE PANTHER REGISTERS THE MULTI-FACETS OF THE SITUATION--
--INCLUDING THE FACT THAT HIS FOE HAS JUST SHATTERED A SOLID MARBLE COLUMN WITH HER WEAPON!
AN ABSURD THOUGHT PASSES THROUGH HIS CALCULATIONS: AREN'T THERE EVER ANY QUIET NIGHTS IN WAKANDA ANYMORE?


THE PANTHER HITS THE GROUND, SPINNING AROUND--
--ONLY TO TURN INTO A JARRING KICK THAT SNAPS HIS MOUTH CLOSED, GOUGING HIS TEETH INTO HIS TONGUE.
THE FIRST TASTE OF BLOOD IS ON HIS LIPS AS MALICE REACHES THE WALL!
I'M NOT ANYTHING LIKE VENOMM, PANTHER!
AND I'M NOT SOME PALACE HANDMAIDEN MADE SOFT BY PALACE INTRIGUES!
SHE HANDLES THE SHAFT LIKE AN EXPERT IN THE MARTIAL ARTS OF JOJITSU--
--AND THE SLIM WOODEN ROD BECOMES A LETHAL WEAPON!
THE DEADLY SHAFT SLICES THE AIR, WHISTLING DEATH--
--BUT THE PANTHER RECOVERS AMAZINGLY FAST, LEAPING OUT OF THE PATH OF THE SWING--
--UNTIL MALICE WHIPS THE SHAFT INTO THE BACK SWING--
--JABBING THE BLUNT END SAVAGELY INTO HIS RIB-CAGE!
MY MOTHER THOUGHT YOU WERE THE GREAT WIZARD KING WHO BROUGHT MAGIC TO OUR LAND!
SHE REMAINED AN IGNORANT HILL WOMAN--
-- BUT KILLMONGER HAS GIVEN ME THESE POWERS AND THE CHANCE FOR SOMETHING MORE IN MY LIFE!
AND YOUR DEATH WILL ASSURE THAT CHANCE!
NO! STOP!

MONICA'S PROTEST SEEMS TO GALVANIZE ALL THE FIGURES INTO ACTION--
--AND THE PANTHER IS THE QUICKEST TO MOVE!
YOU'D CALL MASS SLAUGHTER THE PATH TO INTELLECT, MALICE--
--THEN YOU'D BEST BEWARE, FOR IT'S A PATH LINED WITH THORNS AND LEAVES YOU, PERHAPS, MORE IGNORANT THAN YOUR PARENT EVER WAS!
MALICE! WE'VE GOT US SOME TROUBLE, BABY!
STAY HERE, MENDINAO!
THE REST OF THE TRIBUNAL WILL SPREAD OUT UNTIL MORE OF THIS ATTACK IS KNOWN!
YOUR SOFT SPOKEN WORDS WON'T GET YOU OUT OF A SITUATION LIKE THIS, TAKU!
BUT YOUR "FRIEND" WITH THE FLESH OF A CORPSE WOULD KNOW MORE OF THOSE KIND OF TACTICS THAN YOU!
MY LIMBS HAVE ACHED FOR A FOE TO BATTLE--
-- BUT YOUR KIND WOULD RATHER KILL UNSUSPECTING INNOCENTS!
T'CHALLA SHOULD HAVE MADE YOU TELL WHERE KILLMONGER HIDES DAYS AGO!
AND WHO WOULD YOU HAVE BE HIS TORTURER, W'KABI?
YOU ASK QUESTIONS WHILE HIS AIDE ESCAPES, T'CHALLA!
YOU'VE AVOIDED THE QUESTION THIS TIME.
BUT THERE ARE QUESTIONS I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ASK OF THIS MALICE!

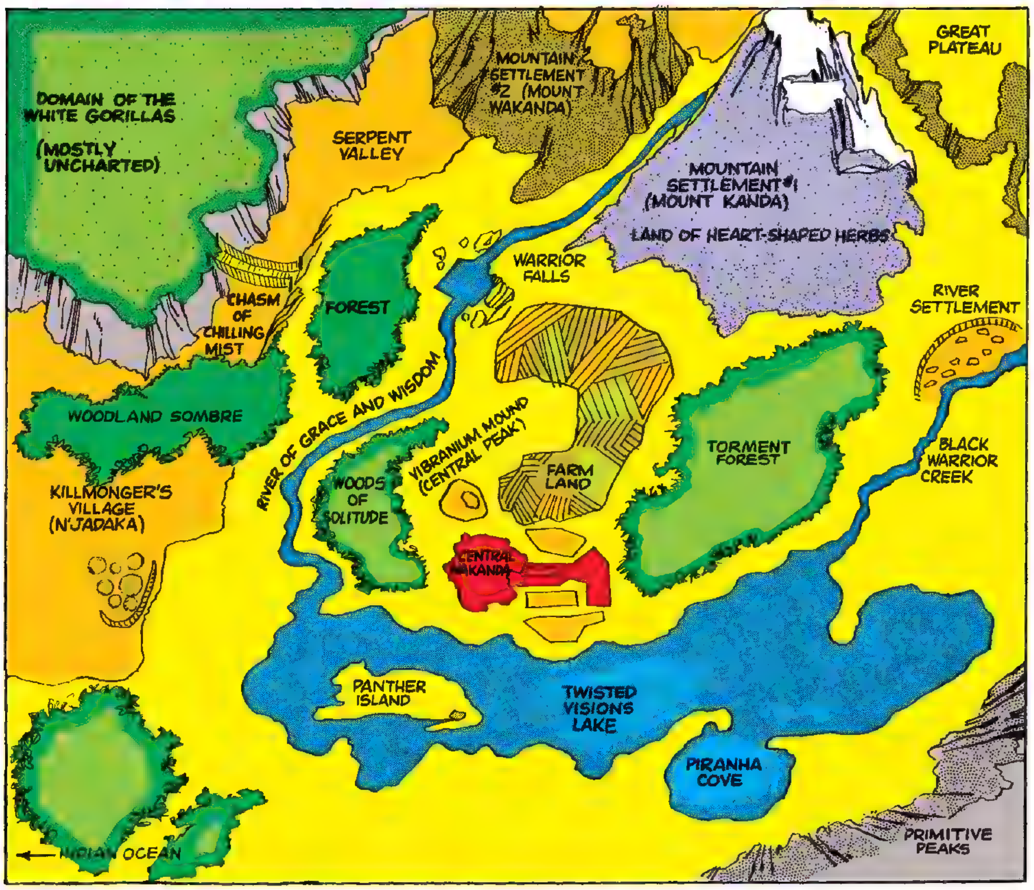


AND ONE OF THEM WOULD BE TO ASK HOW KILLMONGER GAVE HER THE ***INCREDIBLE STRENGTH*** AND POWERS--
--TO ***HEFT*** AND ***HURL*** SUCH A WEAPON AS THIS THROUGH MARBLE COLUMNS!
BUT MALICE IS NOT THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF SUCH A ***STARTLING PERFORMANCE!***
AS SHE DIVES ***GRACEFULLY*** OUT INTO THE ***CRIMSON SHADOWS,*** THE PANTHER UNLEASHES THAT SKULL-NOTCHED WEAPON--
--AND ***WEAKENED*** THOUGH HIS POWERS MAY BE... IT IS AN EXHIBITION OF ***SHEER PERFECTION***--
--PENETRATING RIGHT THROUGH SOLID STONE IN A SHATTERING DISPLAY OF SHRAPNEL!
YOU... YOU'RE GONNA ***KILL ME,*** AREN'T YA?
I REMEMBER WIDOWS ***WEEPING***... I REMEMBER THE CRIES OF A VILLAGE ***SLAIN*** BY YOUR LEADER...
I WILL KILL YOU FOR THOSE ***MEMORIES!***
I KNOW YOUR ***RAGE,*** W'KABI... YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE HOW ***SIMILAR*** TO MY OWN YOURS IS.
BUT THIS DEATH WILL LEAVE YOU WITH A ***MEMORY*** AS DAMNING AS THE ONES YOU ***MENTION.***
THIS IS NOT THE WAY. NOT ***THIS*** NIGHT...
... NOT ***ANY*** NIGHT...
... CRIMSON ... OR OTHERWISE.
NEXT
BARON MACABRE

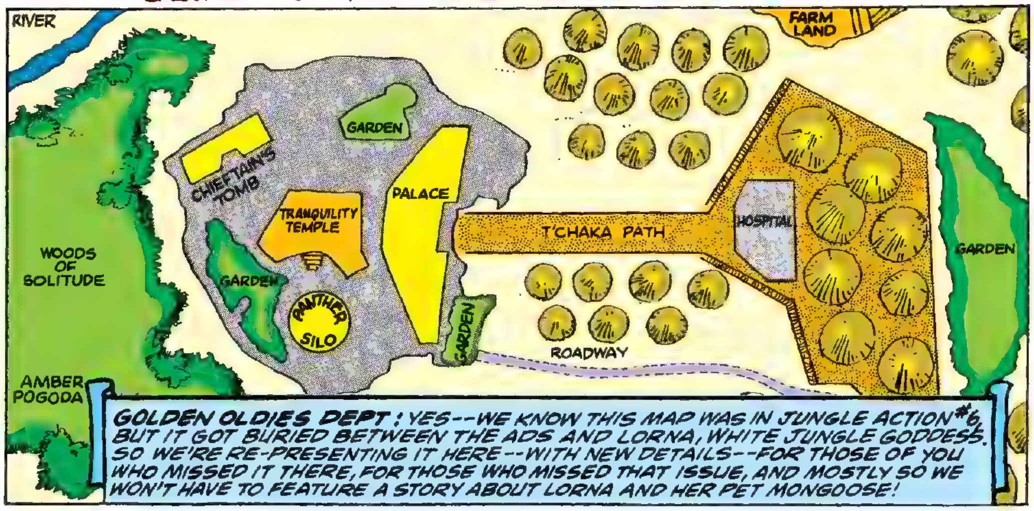
PRESENTING: A SPECIAL ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME DISPLAY OF MODERN AMERICAN
BLACK PANTHER
Artistry
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE LOYAL ORDER OF THE WAKANDA CON, MADISON AVE BRANCH (ALL PROCEEDS TO BE DONATED TO SAVE THE WHITE GORILLA FUND)
"T'CHALLA ON THE PROWL" by JOHN BUSCEMA and THE LATE, GREAT GEORGE KLIEN
(AS PRESENTED IN THE AVENGERS #58)
"PANTHER IN MOTION" by BARRY SMITH and JOHNNY CRAIG
(AS PRESENTED IN DAREDEVIL #52)
IT'S HIM!!

"STALKER IN A SCIENTIFIC WONDERLAND" by JACK KIRBY and JOE SINNOTT (AS PRESENTED IN FANTASTIC FOUR #52)
"KNOWLEDGE IN STRENGTH" by HERB TRIMPE (AS PRESENTED IN INCREDIBLE HULK #128)
"HOME IS THE WARRIOR" by RICH BUCKLER and KLAUS JANSON
(COMMEMORATING THE RETURN OF T'CHALLA TO HIS HOMELAND OF WAKANDA, AS PRESENTED IN JUNGLE ACTION #6 & 7)
IT HASN'T BEEN AN EASY ROAD FOR T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA TO FOLLOW. THERE HAS BEEN HARDSHIP, PAIN, AND EVEN FAILURE, BUT THE SPIRIT OF THE BLACK PANTHER CAN NEVER BE VANQUISHED.
WAKANDA SHALL ENDURE!

MAP OF THE LAND OF THE WAKANDA

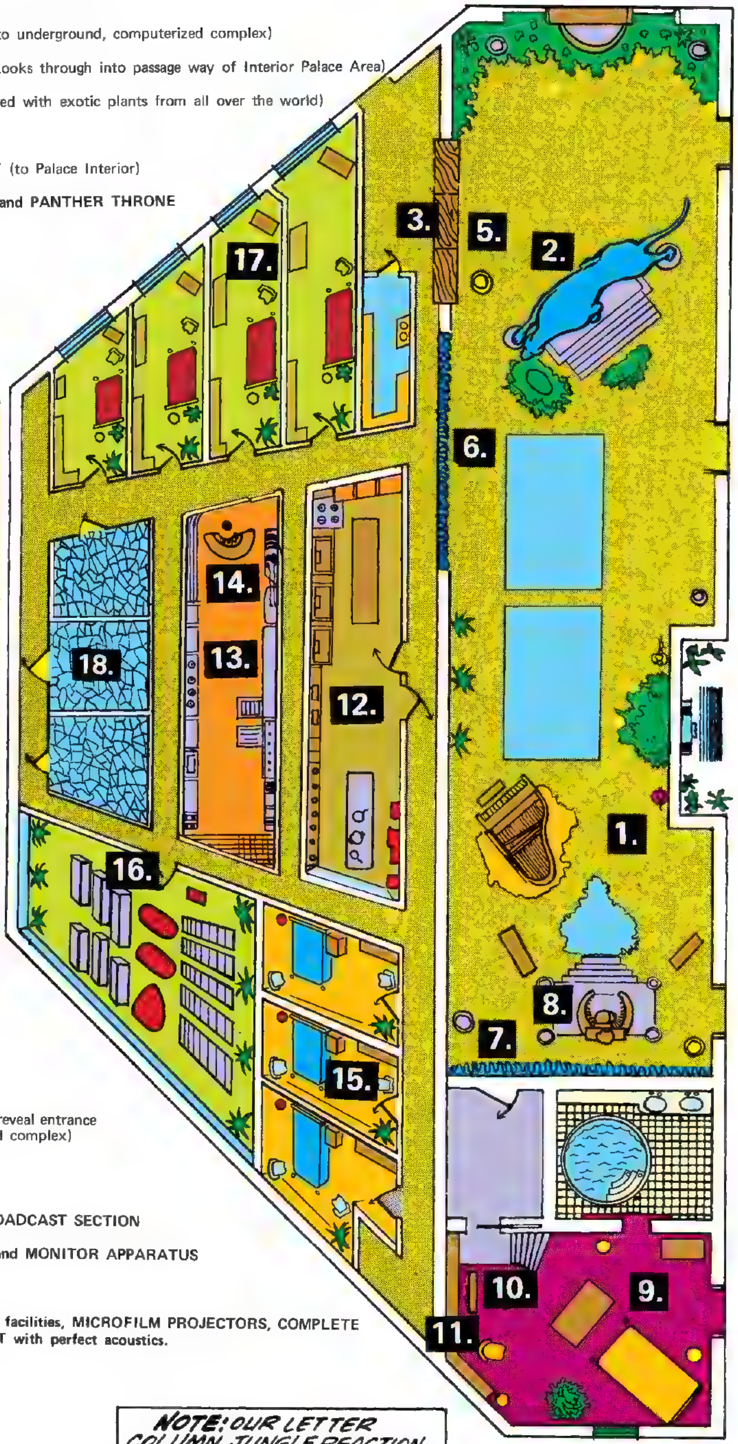


CENTRAL WAKANDA



1. THRONE ROOM AND RECEPTION AREA
2. PANTHER STATUE
(on swivel base, entranceway to underground, computerized complex)
3. INSET WALL AQUARIUM (Looks through into passage way of Interior Palace Area)
4. BOTANNICAL GARDEN (Filled with exotic plants from all over the world)
5. TORCHES
6. & 7. CURTAINED ARCHWAY (to Palace Interior)
8. TRIBUNAL SESSION AREA and PANTHER THRONE
9. T'CHALLA'S QUARTERS

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WONDERED JUST WHERE ALL THE ***CATACLYSMIC EVENTS*** IN THIS ISH HAPPENED-- HERE'S AN ALL-REVEALING (WELL, NOT ALL, BUT ALMOST ALL) LAYOUT SCHEMATIC OF ***CENTRAL WAKANDA'S PALACE ROYAL!***



10. MONITOR SCREEN
11. BOOKCASE, (slides aside to reveal entrance to Underground Computerized complex)
12. COMMISSARY AREA
13. COMMUNICATIONS and BROADCAST SECTION
14. TAKU'S CONTROL PANEL and MONITOR APPARATUS
15. GUEST QUARTERS
16. LIBRARY with VIDEO-TAPE facilities, MICROFILM PROJECTORS, COMPLETE STEREOPHONIC EQUIPMENT with perfect acoustics.
17. STAFF QUARTERS
18. RESTRICTION CELLS

NOTE: OUR LETTER COLUMN, JUNGLE REACTION, FOLLOWS ON THE NEXT PAGE!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

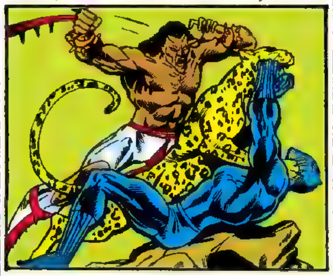
Dear Roy,

Comics I assume may be legitimately graded, like term papers. I do not hesitate therefore to give BLACK PANTHER's sixth issue an *A*, a sliver off highest of the high. Rich Buckler, a giant of an artist, produced for this issue of this very fine comic, brilliant action scenes and character studies the like of which I haven't seen since Neal Adams last took pen in hand. Both artists have the action forte, and while Adams' influence is evident in Buckler's work, Rich's style is still unique and vivid. His shadings were very effective, and I have to compliment the anonymous zip-a-tone artist for his work on this issue. Don McGregor is a bright new light in scripting and he shone here for true. His dialog was expressive and imaginative. his captions just a little less so. Every Marvel comic I've ever opened has had over-wordy captions . . . so it is here as well. But Don's pacing, emphasis, and especially his dialog, the fine words he put in the mouths of his characters, they were like the story itself, grade *A* material. So why don't I go all out in my hysteria and give the story an *A*? Well, it was faulted, is why, and where the fault lies is with the villain. Killmonger possessed none of the hypnotic charisma of the true revolutionary . . . he seemed no more than a typical Marvel muscleman with big teeth and big phrases. Big deal. A glimpse of him at his nefarious political swindling might have been helpful, raising his character from the two dimensions he was on the page. Still the artwork and the skillful script were excellent, and furthermore meshed excellently . . . I wouldn't lose any slumber over Killmonger's vapid characterization if I were you.

Guy Lillian III
909 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Thanks for the compliments, Guy, and with your reputation as a critic of the comic media, they are well taken. Actually, Don felt much the same way as you did about Killmonger, but there just wasn't much room to do more with him in that first issue since there were a number of other characters carousing through those pages. Anyhow, we hope that some of the scenes with Killmonger in this issue and J.A. #7 have made him a bit more than two dimensional. And if they didn't, well, you can't win 'em all.

By the way, Marvelites, in case your not in the know, Guy is doing a comic review section in the beautifully-produced MENOMONEE FALLS GAZETTE, which is more than worth your time.



Dear Masters of Marvel,

The first new adventure of the BLACK PANTHER had immeasurable quality that I had not expected. The team working on it gave it a kind of specialness. Keep it up. I look forward to more of T'Challa's adventures.

Alexa Louinois
3301 Hewitt Ave.
Hermitage, Woods Condominium
Silver Springs, Md. 20906

Dear People,

I wanted to write you good folks and compliment you on one of your newer features, the BLACK PANTHER. It was nice to see that all of your new stuff isn't supernatural in orientation, and it was even nicer to see it done so well, so I hope you don't cancel the Panther without giving him a fair run.

Also, the Panther's features should be lengthened to fill all of JUNGLE ACTION.

Robert Lowrey
Richardson, Texas

Well, you've received part of your wish, Bob, thanks to help above and beyond the call of duty from Alex Simmons, Jim Salicrup, Tony Isabella, Ed Hannigan, and especially, Dave Hunt, who all pitched in and aided Don with the feature pages for this issue. We'll have to wait awhile before any decision is made as to whether the Panther will become a regular 19 page feature, but we've got a number of senses shattering surprises in store for you within the current page count. So stick with us. (By the way, are there any surprises at Marvel that aren't senses shattering? Don't bother answering as all the senses here at the Bullpen have already been completely shattered.)

Dear Bullpen,

JUNGLE ACTION #6, which I have just finished reading, was on the whole a good comic. The story was interesting enough, but there is one point I would like to discuss.

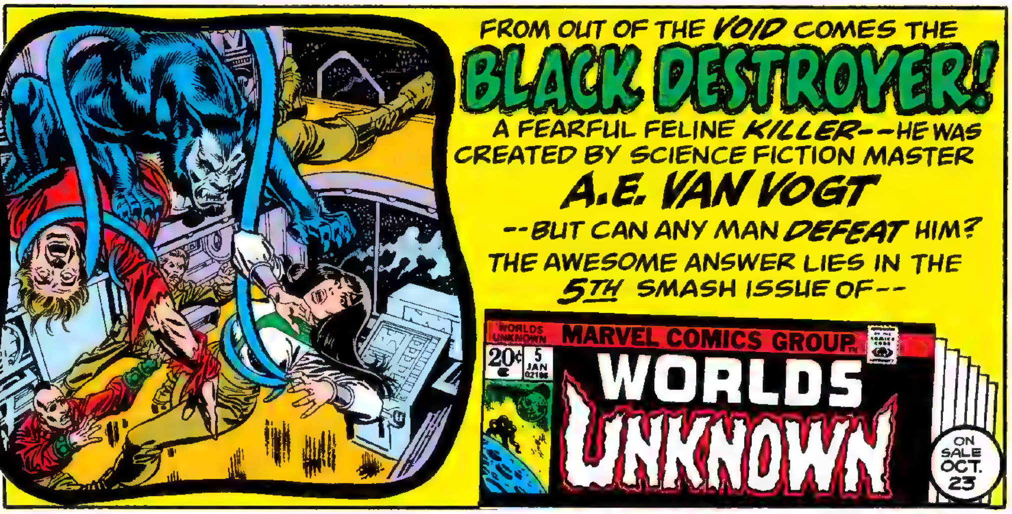
In issue #6, T'Challa gives the impression that he has just returned from New York, while in the last panels of AVENGERS #112, the Panther states that he will not return to Wakanda. I would appreciate it if you would clear up this matter.

R.F.O. Richard McQuaig
(No Address Given)

Stainless Steve's Avenger opus occurred before T'Challa received word of all the turmoil disrupting Wakanda. Our jungle king is probably not quite as sure about those imperishable words as he was in those happier days. Does that get us off the hook, Rich? Oh, it doesn't. Well, you win some, you lose some. Next time Stainless Steve is visiting the Bullpen, we'll ask him for *his* answer.

NEXT ISSUE: BARON MACABRE: Call him Baron — or call him Macabre! Anyway you call it he brings death from the grave!

PLUS: A real, honest to goodness Murder Mystery the likes of which haven't been seen since SLEUTH and SHERLOCK HOLMES GAVE DOGGIE BISCUITS TO THE HOUNDS OF THE BASKERVILLES!



JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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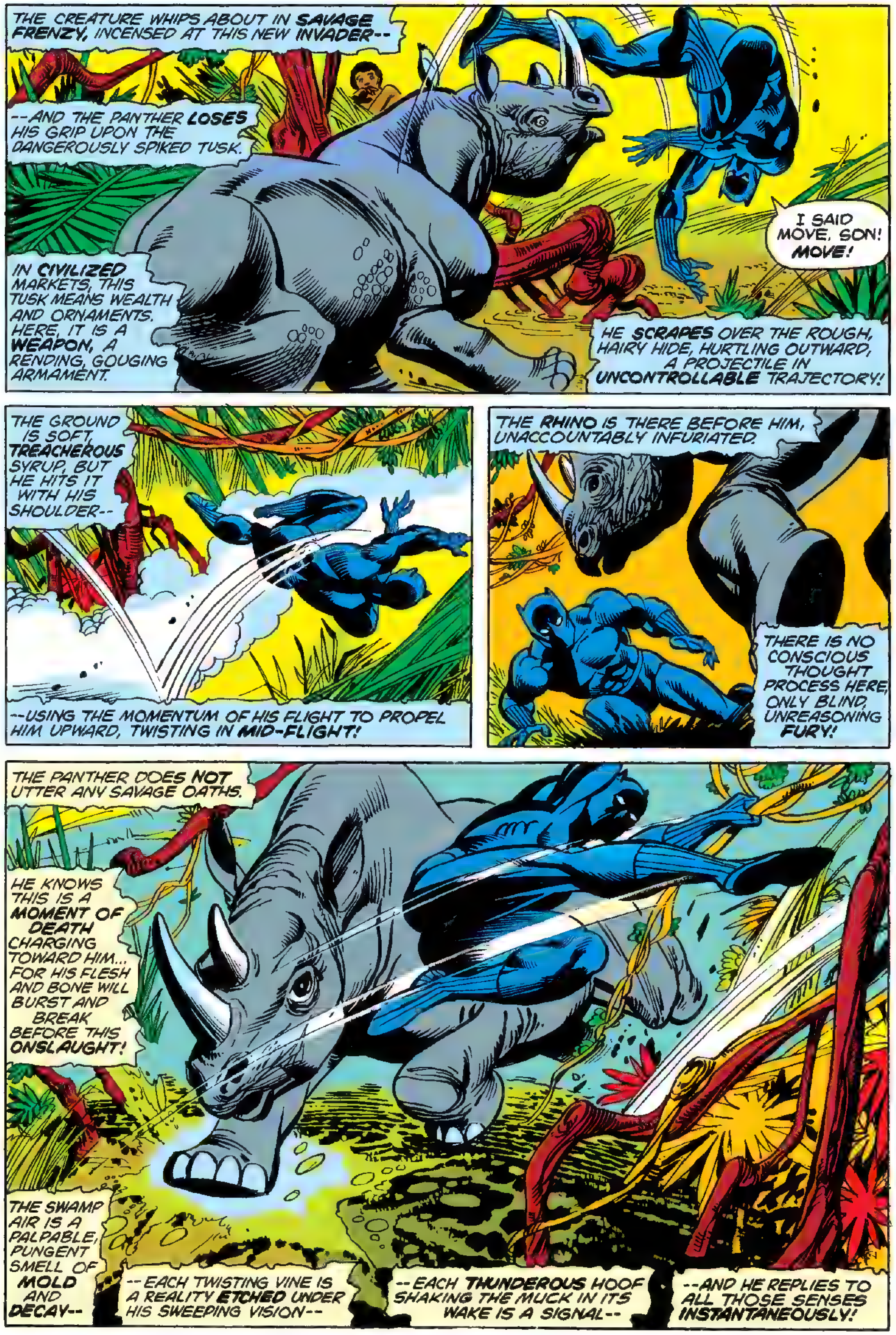
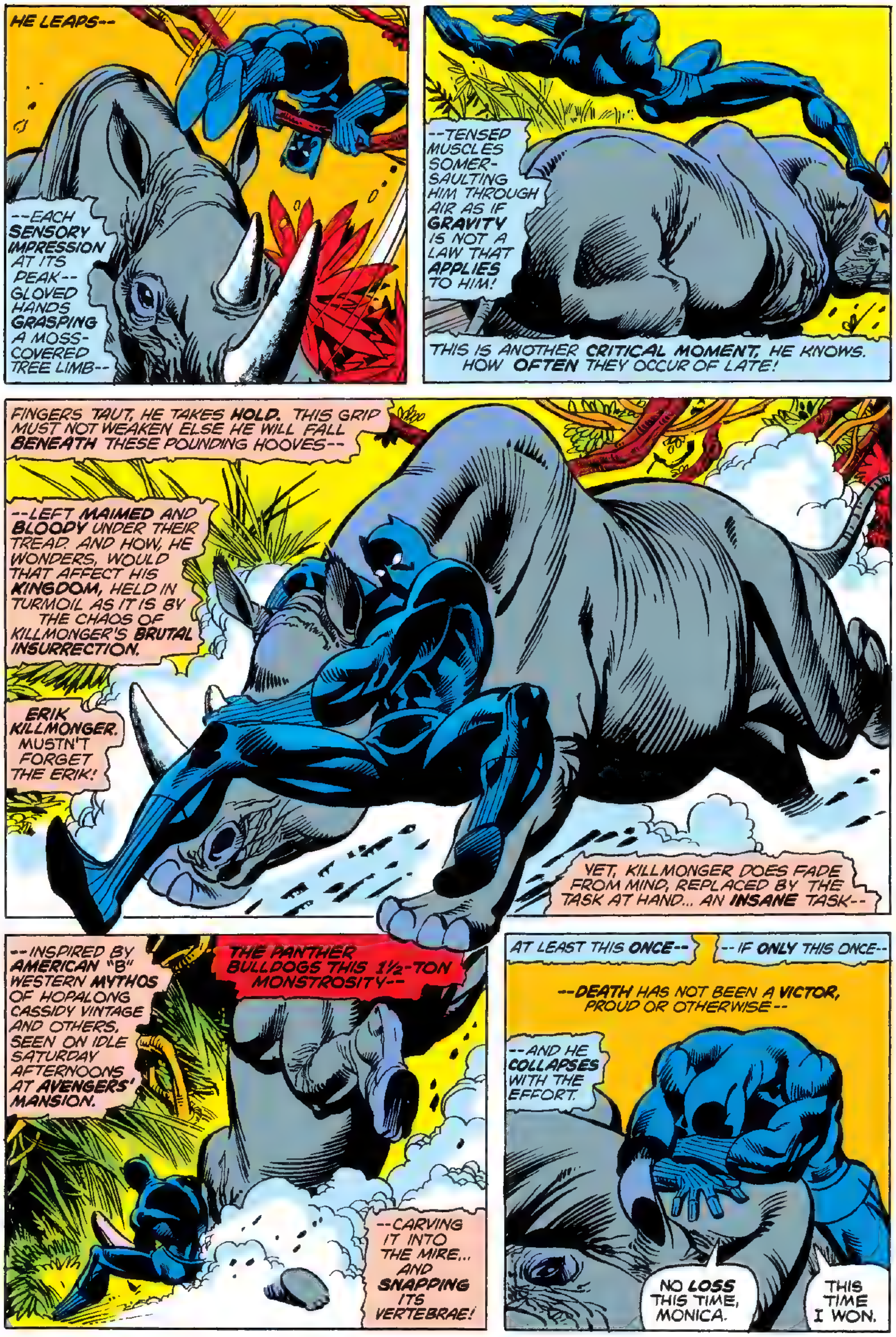
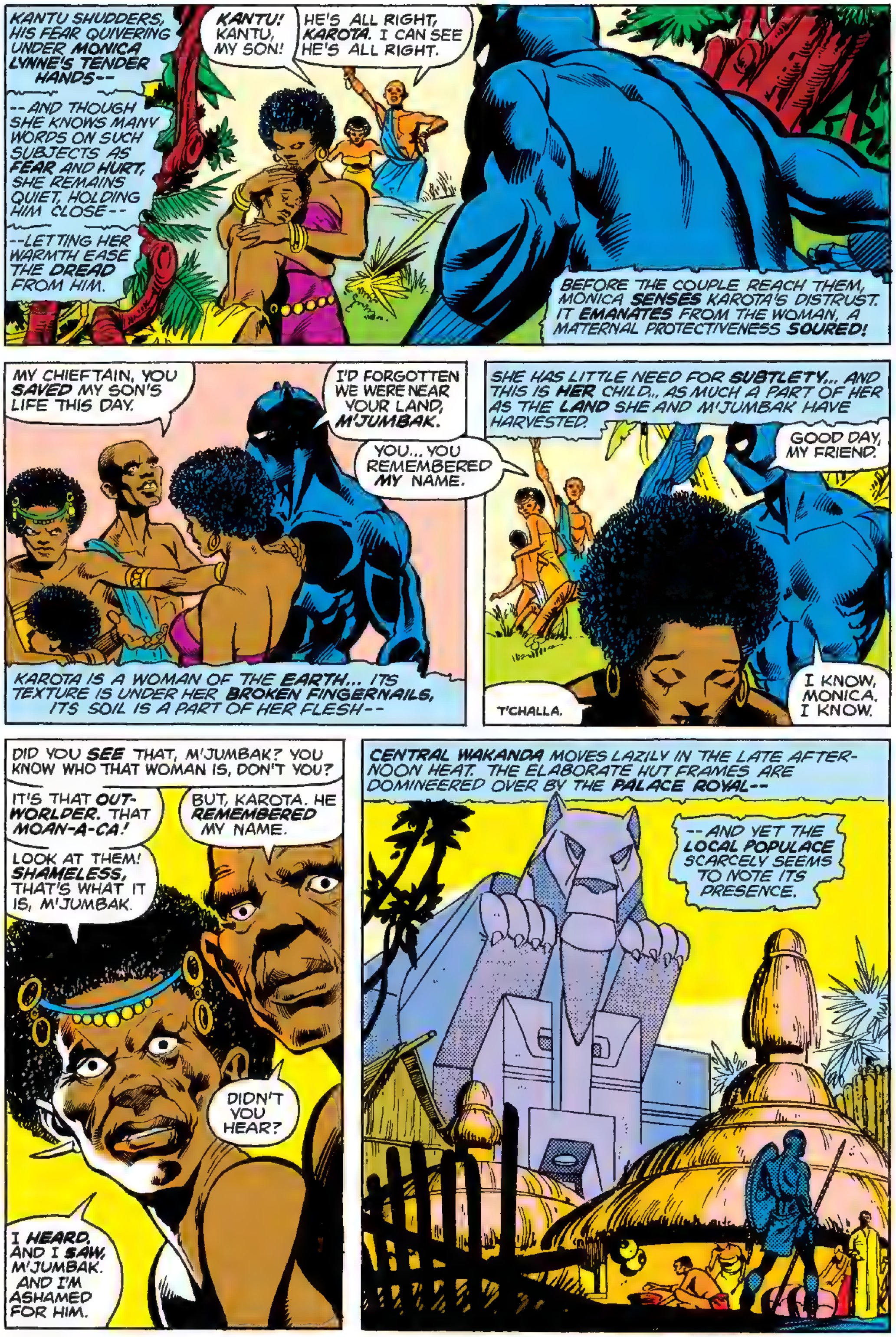
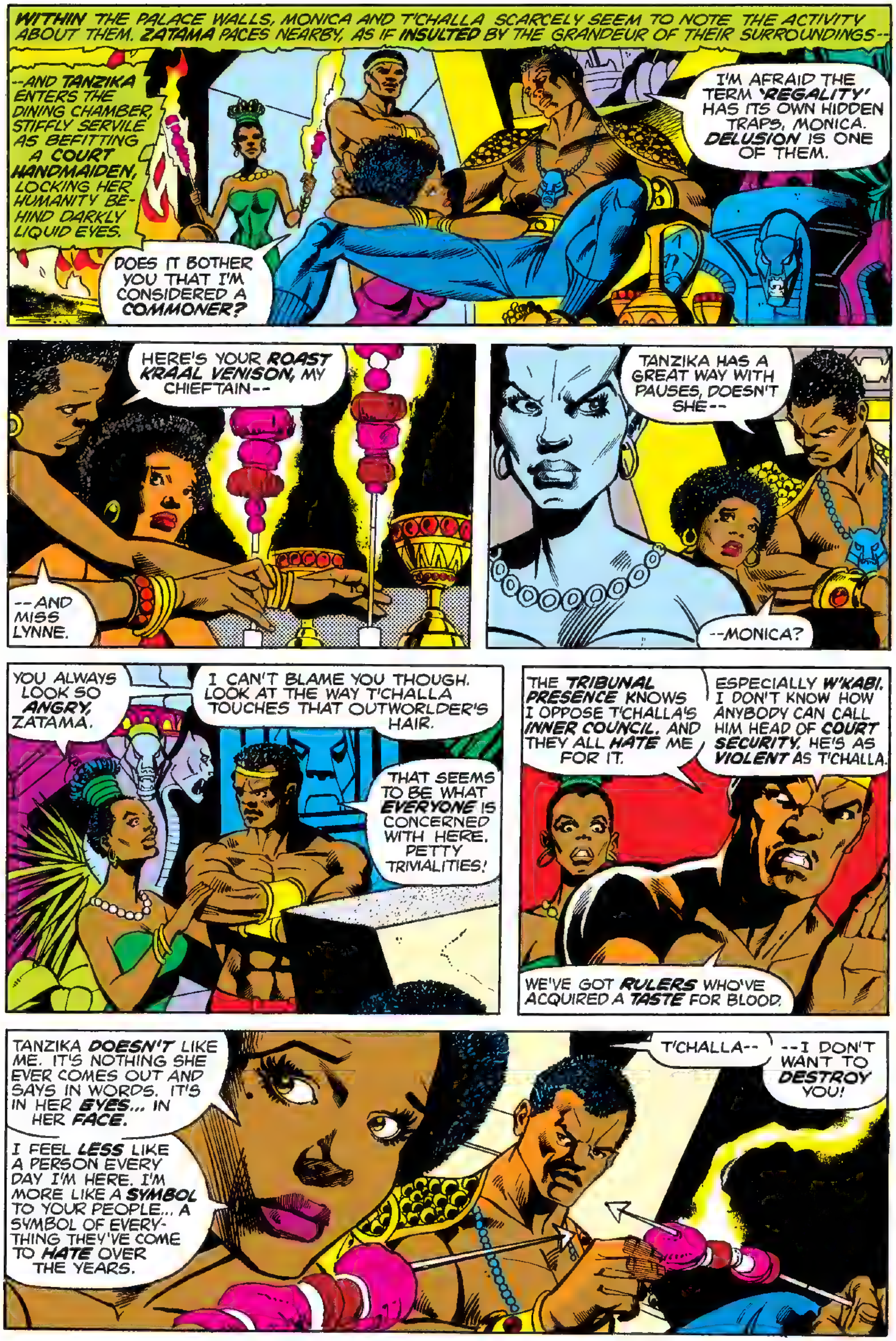
MAY
02161
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
NO MATTER HOW MANY I STRIKE DOWN-- THEY KEEP COMING--
THEY STALK BY NIGHT!
BARON MACABRE AND HIS DENIZENS OF DEATH!
--RISING FROM OUT OF THEIR GRAVES!

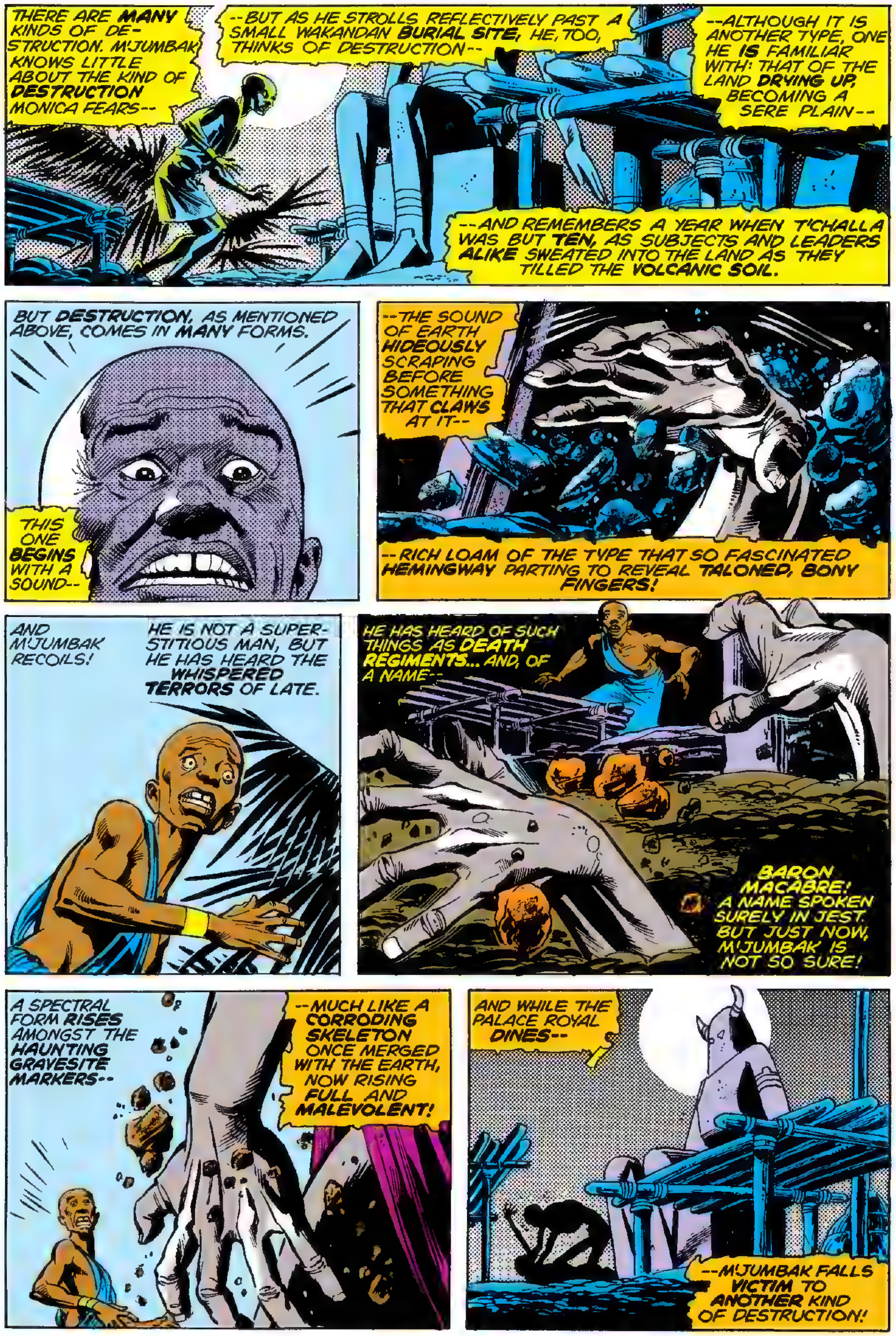
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
WAKANDA! IT IS A NATION OF PARADOXES. TECHNOLOGY COEXISTING WITH PRIMITIVE TRADITION... AND NOT ALWAYS COEXISTING PEACEFULLY. WAKANDA! ON THE OUTER PERIMETER OF ITS FARMLAND THERE IS STILL A TIME FOR SUNLIT EXPLORATIONS... A TIME BEFORE A YOUTH MUST DECIDE WHETHER TO FOLLOW THE TRADITION OF HIS ELDERS OR TO ENTER A COMPLEX WORLD OF COMPUTERIZED DYNAMICS.
KANTU MOVES WITH EXAGGERATED STEALTH...
...INTENT ON BRINGING HIS IMAGINARY PREY TO BAY. HIS INTENSE FANTASY IS SHATTERED--
MOVE, SON! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
--BY THE ENRAGED CHARGE OF A 3000-POUND BLACK RHINOCEROUS-- AND A DEATH-DEFYING DESCENT BY... THE BLACK PANTHER!
PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES
BUT NOW THE SPEARS ARE BROKEN
WRITER: DON McGREGOR
ARTISTS: G. KANE & K. JANSON
LETTERS: ORZ
COLORS: G. WEIN
EDITOR: ROY THOMAS


THE CREATURE WHIPS ABOUT IN SAVAGE FRENZY, INCENSED AT THIS NEW INVADER--
--AND THE PANTHER LOSES HIS GRIP UPON THE DANGEROUSLY SPIKED TUSK.
I SAID MOVE, SON! MOVE!
IN CIVILIZED MARKETS, THIS TUSK MEANS WEALTH AND ORNAMENTS. HERE, IT IS A WEAPON, A RENDING, GOUGING ARMAMENT.
HE SCRAPES OVER THE ROUGH, HAIRY HIDE, HURTLING OUTWARD, A PROJECTILE IN UNCONTROLLABLE TRAJECTORY!
THE GROUND IS SOFT, TREACHEROUS SYRUP, BUT HE HITS IT WITH HIS SHOULDER--
--USING THE MOMENTUM OF HIS FLIGHT TO PROPEL HIM UPWARD, TWISTING IN MID-FLIGHT!
THE RHINO IS THERE BEFORE HIM, UNACCOUNTABLY INFURIATED.
THERE IS NO CONSCIOUS THOUGHT PROCESS HERE, ONLY BLIND, UNREASONING FURY!
THE PANTHER DOES NOT UTTER ANY SAVAGE OATHS.
HE KNOWS THIS IS A MOMENT OF DEATH CHARGING TOWARD HIM... FOR HIS FLESH AND BONE WILL BURST AND BREAK BEFORE THIS ONSLAUGHT!
THE SWAMP AIR IS A PALPABLE, PUNGENT SMELL OF MOLD AND DECAY--
--EACH TWISTING VINE IS A REALITY ETCHED UNDER HIS SWEEPING VISION--
--EACH THUNDEROUS HOOF SHAKING THE MUCK IN ITS WAKE IS A SIGNAL--
--AND HE REPLIES TO ALL THOSE SENSES INSTANTANEOUSLY!


HE LEAPS--
--EACH SENSORY IMPRESSION AT ITS PEAK-- GLOVED HANDS GRASPING A MOSS-COVERED TREE LIMB--
--TENSED MUSCLES SOMER-SAULTING HIM THROUGH AIR AS IF GRAVITY IS NOT A LAW THAT APPLIES TO HIM!
THIS IS ANOTHER CRITICAL MOMENT, HE KNOWS. HOW OFTEN THEY OCCUR OF LATE!
FINGERS TAUT, HE TAKES HOLD. THIS GRIP MUST NOT WEAKEN ELSE HE WILL FALL BENEATH THESE POUNDING HOOVES--
--LEFT MAIMED AND BLOODY UNDER THEIR TREAD. AND HOW, HE WONDERS, WOULD THAT AFFECT HIS KINGDOM, HELD IN TURMOIL AS IT IS BY THE CHAOS OF KILLMONGER'S BRUTAL INSURRECTION.
ERIK KILLMONGER. MUSTN'T FORGET THE ERIK!
YET, KILLMONGER DOES FADE FROM MIND, REPLACED BY THE TASK AT HAND... AN INSANE TASK--
--INSPIRED BY AMERICAN "B" WESTERN MYTHOS OF HOPALONG CASSIDY VINTAGE AND OTHERS, SEEN ON IDLE SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AT AVENGERS' MANSION.
THE PANTHER BULLDOGS THIS 1½-TON MONSTROSITY--
--CARVING IT INTO THE MIRE... AND SNAPPING ITS VERTEBRAE!
AT LEAST THIS ONCE--
--IF ONLY THIS ONCE--
--DEATH HAS NOT BEEN A VICTOR, PROUD OR OTHERWISE--
--AND HE COLLAPSES WITH THE EFFORT.
NO LOSS THIS TIME, MONICA.
THIS TIME I WON.

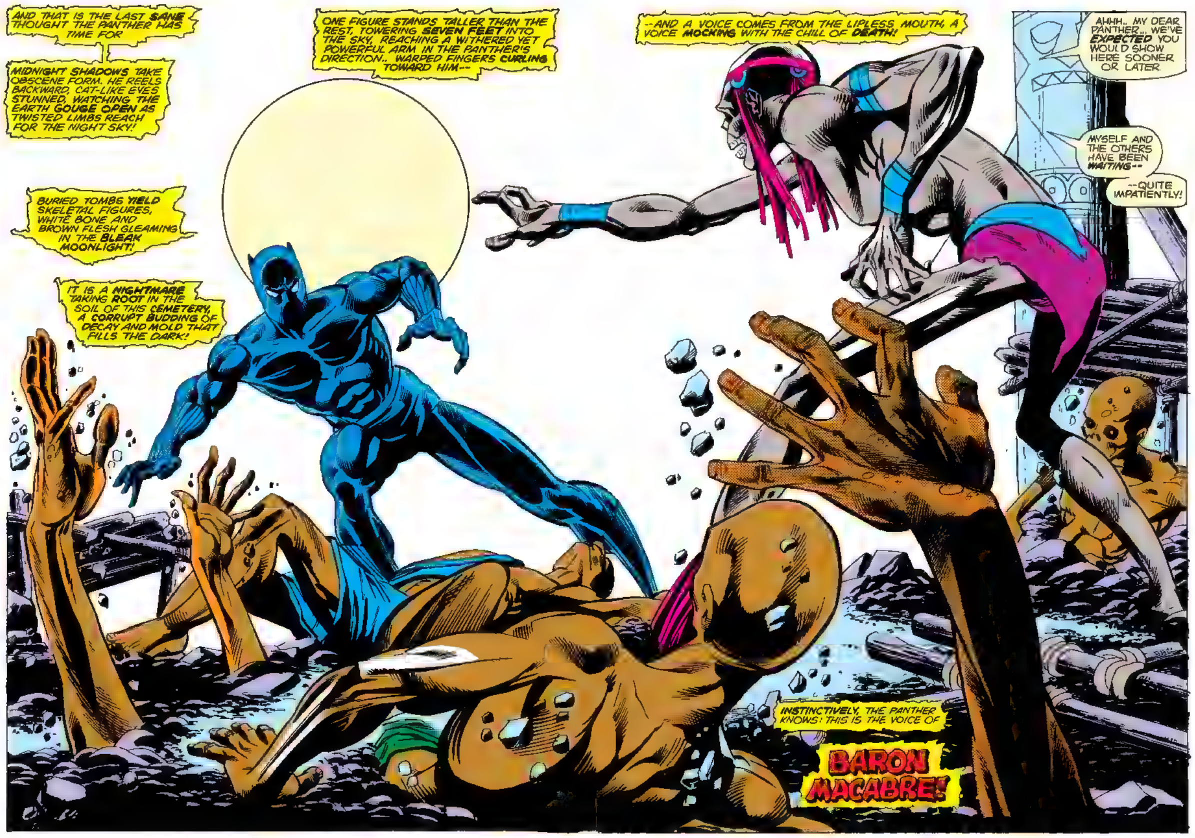

KANTU SHUDDERS, HIS FEAR QUIVERING UNDER MONICA LYNNE'S TENDER HANDS--
--AND THOUGH SHE KNOWS MANY WORDS ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS FEAR AND HURT, SHE REMAINS QUIET, HOLDING HIM CLOSE--
--LETTING HER WARMTH EASE THE DREAD FROM HIM.
KANTU! KANTU, MY SON!
HE'S ALL RIGHT, KAROTA. I CAN SEE HE'S ALL RIGHT.
BEFORE THE COUPLE REACH THEM, MONICA SENSES KAROTA'S DISTRUST. IT EMANATES FROM THE WOMAN, A MATERNAL PROTECTIVENESS SOURED!
MY CHIEFTAIN, YOU SAVED MY SON'S LIFE THIS DAY.
I'D FORGOTTEN WE WERE NEAR YOUR LAND, M'JUMBAK.
YOU... YOU REMEMBERED MY NAME.
KAROTA IS A WOMAN OF THE EARTH... ITS TEXTURE IS UNDER HER BROKEN FINGERNAILS, ITS SOIL IS A PART OF HER FLESH--
SHE HAS LITTLE NEED FOR SUBTLETY... AND THIS IS HER CHILD... AS MUCH A PART OF HER AS THE LAND SHE AND M'JUMBAK HAVE HARVESTED.
GOOD DAY, MY FRIEND.
T'CHALLA.
I KNOW, MONICA. I KNOW.
DID YOU SEE THAT, M'JUMBAK? YOU KNOW WHO THAT WOMAN IS, DON'T YOU?
IT'S THAT OUT-WORLDER. THAT MOAN-A-CA!
BUT, KAROTA. HE REMEMBERED MY NAME.
LOOK AT THEM! SHAMELESS, THAT'S WHAT IT IS, M'JUMBAK.
DIDN'T YOU HEAR?
I HEARD. AND I SAW, M'JUMBAK. AND I'M ASHAMED FOR HIM.
CENTRAL WAKANDA MOVES LAZILY IN THE LATE AFTER-NOON HEAT. THE ELABORATE HUT FRAMES ARE DOMINEERED OVER BY THE PALACE ROYAL--
--AND YET THE LOCAL POPULACE SCARCELY SEEMS TO NOTE ITS PRESENCE.

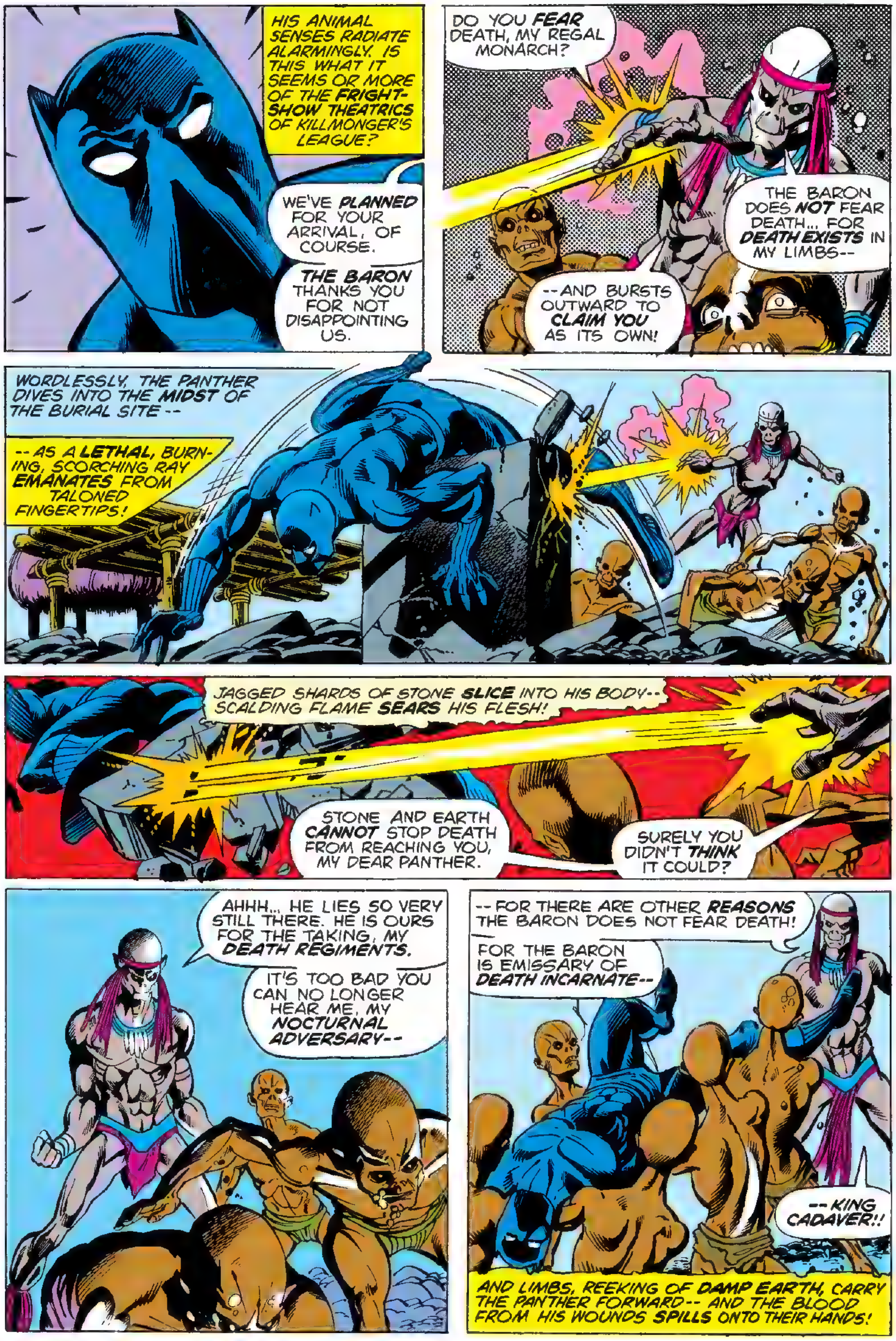

WITHIN THE PALACE WALLS, MONICA AND T'CHALLA SCARCELY SEEM TO NOTE THE ACTIVITY ABOUT THEM. ZATAMA PACES NEARBY, AS IF INSULTED BY THE GRANDEUR OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS--
--AND TANZIKA ENTERS THE DINING CHAMBER, STIFFLY SERVILE AS BEFITTING A COURT HANDMAIDEN, LOCKING HER HUMANITY BEHIND DARKLY LIQUID EYES.
DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT I'M CONSIDERED A COMMONER?
I'M AFRAID THE TERM 'REGALITY' HAS ITS OWN HIDDEN TRAPS, MONICA. DELUSION IS ONE OF THEM.
HERE'S YOUR ROAST KRAAL VENISON, MY CHIEFTAIN--
--AND MISS LYNNE.
TANZIKA HAS A GREAT WAY WITH PAUSES, DOESN'T SHE--
--MONICA?
YOU ALWAYS LOOK SO ANGRY, ZATAMA.
I CAN'T BLAME YOU THOUGH. LOOK AT THE WAY T'CHALLA TOUCHES THAT OUTWORLDER'S HAIR.
THAT SEEMS TO BE WHAT EVERYONE IS CONCERNED WITH HERE. PETTY TRIVIALITIES!
THE TRIBUNAL PRESENCE KNOWS I OPPOSE T'CHALLA'S INNER COUNCIL, AND THEY ALL HATE ME FOR IT.
ESPECIALLY W'KABI. I DON'T KNOW HOW ANYBODY CAN CALL HIM HEAD OF COURT SECURITY. HE'S AS VIOLENT AS T'CHALLA.
WE'VE GOT RULERS WHO'VE ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR BLOOD.
TANZIKA DOESN'T LIKE ME. IT'S NOTHING SHE EVER COMES OUT AND SAYS IN WORDS. IT'S IN HER EYES... IN HER FACE.
I FEEL LESS LIKE A PERSON EVERY DAY I'M HERE. I'M MORE LIKE A SYMBOL TO YOUR PEOPLE... A SYMBOL OF EVERYTHING THEY'VE COME TO HATE OVER THE YEARS.
T'CHALLA--
--I DON'T WANT TO DESTROY YOU!



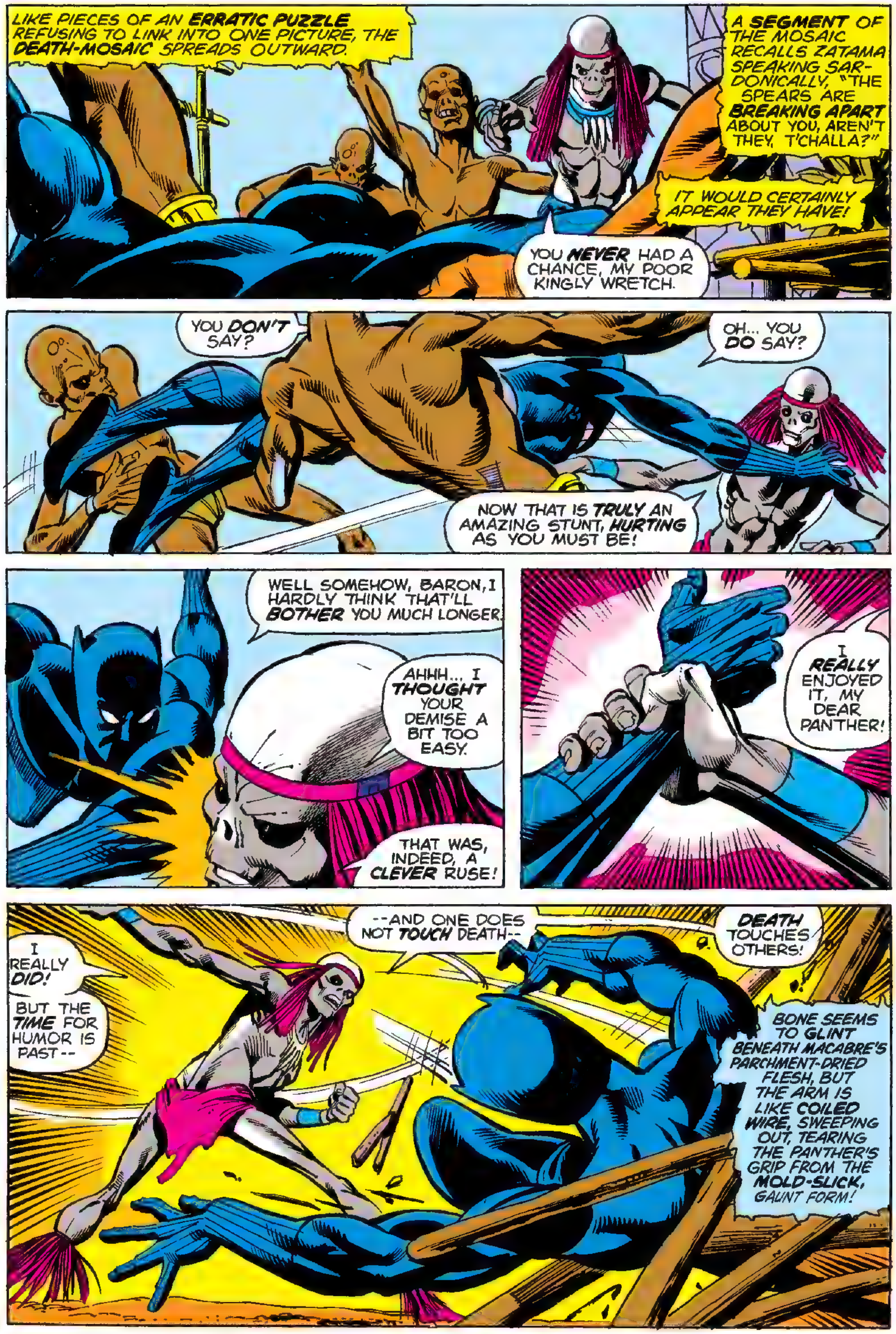
THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF DESTRUCTION. M'JUMBAK KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT THE KIND OF DESTRUCTION MONICA FEARS--
--BUT AS HE STROLLS REFLECTIVELY PAST A SMALL WAKANDAN BURIAL SITE, HE, TOO, THINKS OF DESTRUCTION--
--ALTHOUGH IT IS ANOTHER TYPE, ONE HE IS FAMILIAR WITH: THAT OF THE LAND DRYING UP, BECOMING A SERE PLAIN--
--AND REMEMBERS A YEAR WHEN T'CHALLA WAS BUT TEN, AS SUBJECTS AND LEADERS ALIKE SWEATED INTO THE LAND AS THEY TILLED THE VOLCANIC SOIL.
BUT DESTRUCTION, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, COMES IN MANY FORMS.
THIS ONE BEGINS WITH A SOUND--
--THE SOUND OF EARTH HIDEOUSLY SCRAPING BEFORE SOMETHING THAT CLAWS AT IT--
--RICH LOAM OF THE TYPE THAT SO FASCINATED HEMINGWAY PARTING TO REVEAL TALONED, BONY FINGERS!
AND M'JUMBAK RECOILS!
HE IS NOT A SUPERSTITIOUS MAN, BUT HE HAS HEARD THE WHISPERED TERRORS OF LATE.
HE HAS HEARD OF SUCH THINGS AS DEATH REGIMENTS... AND, OF A NAME--
BARON MACABRE! A NAME SPOKEN SURELY IN JEST. BUT JUST NOW, M'JUMBAK IS NOT SO SURE!
A SPECTRAL FORM RISES AMONGST THE HAUNTING GRAVESITE MARKERS--
--MUCH LIKE A CORRODING SKELETON ONCE MERGED WITH THE EARTH, NOW RISING FULL AND MALEVOLENT!
AND WHILE THE PALACE ROYAL DINES--
--M'JUMBAK FALLS VICTIM TO ANOTHER KIND OF DESTRUCTION!

YOU TALK OF DESTRUCTION, MONICA. BUT THAT IS A DECISION ALL LOVERS MUST MAKE--
--WHETHER THEIR RELATIONSHIP WILL DESTROY... OR AID AND HEAL THE OTHER.
IT'S OFTEN THE MOST DIFFICULT DECISION THEY'LL HAVE TO MAKE--
--AND, AS LOVE IS NOT A CONSTANTLY STABLE FACTOR, IT'S ONE THEY'LL HAVE TO MAKE AGAIN AND AGAIN.
T'CHALLA!
WHAT IS IT, ZATAMA?
HOW IN...?
W'KABI JUST HAD THIS... WEAPON SENT UP. IT'S THE ONE YOU TOOK... FORCEFULLY FROM KILLMONGER'S AIDES.
IT'S THE SAME KIND AS THE KILLING INSTRUMENTS YOUR GUARDS USE IN YOUR UNDERGROUND, COMPUTERIZED JUNGLE.
W'KABI'S FOAMING AT THE MOUTH AGAIN. WANTS TO TAKE YOUR PRISONER VENOMM APART... AND THREATENED ME IN THE BARGAIN.
THE SPEARS ARE BREAKING APART ABOUT YOU, AREN'T THEY, T'CHALLA?
RIGHT NOW ONE OF YOUR SUBJECTS IS CRYING SHE MUST SEE YOU. SAYS HER NAME'S KAROTA.
MY CHIEFTAIN, M'JUMBAK... HE IS MISSING! HE WENT FOR A WALK IN THE NIGHT AIR AS HE DOES EVERY NIGHT.
HE ALWAYS RETURNS BEFORE KANTU GOES TO SLEEP. EXCEPT TONIGHT.
I FOLLOWED HIS TRACKS AWAYS. THEY LED TOWARD THE BURIAL SITE! AND HE KNOWS IT'S HAUNTED!
HAUNTED? BY WHAT... OR WHO?
BY THE BARON, OF COURSE.
BARON MACABRE!
THE NAME SENDS THE PANTHER INTO THE COOL NIGHT--
--AND HE FINDS M'JUMBAK--
--AND SADLY RECALLS THE WARMTH OF THE FARMER'S HANDSHAKE ONLY HOURS EARLIER.

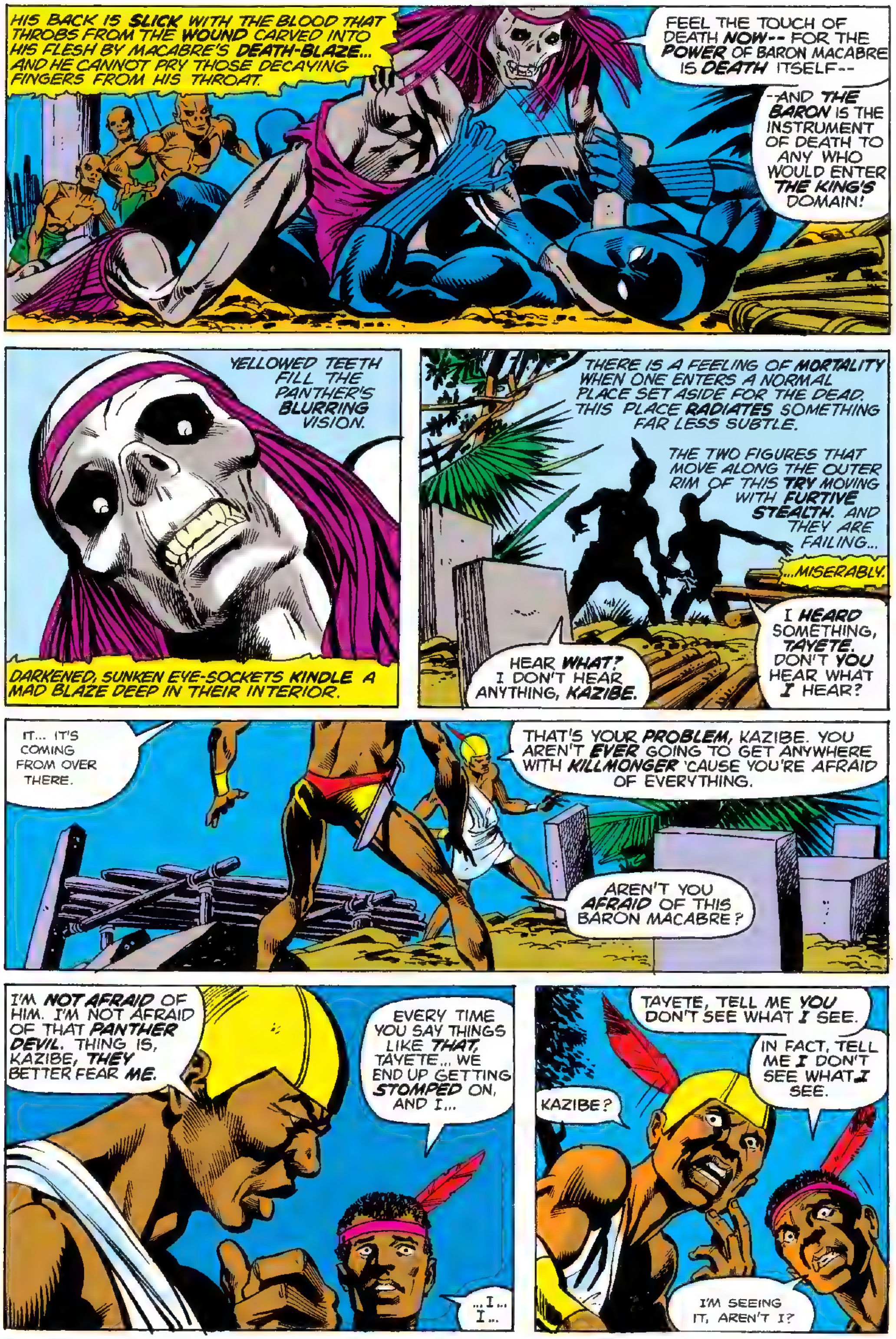

AND THAT IS THE LAST SANE THOUGHT THE PANTHER HAS TIME FOR
MIDNIGHT SHADOWS TAKE OBSCENE FORM. HE REELS BACKWARD, CAT-LIKE EYES STUNNED, WATCHING THE EARTH GOUGE OPEN AS TWISTED LIMBS REACH FOR THE NIGHT SKY!
BURIED TOMBS YIELD SKELETAL FIGURES, WHITE BONE AND BROWN FLESH GLEAMING IN THE BLEAK MOONLIGHT!
IT IS A NIGHTMARE TAKING ROOT IN THE SOIL OF THIS CEMETERY, A CORRUPT BUDDING OF DECAY AND MOLD THAT FILLS THE DARK!
ONE FIGURE STANDS TALLER THAN THE REST, TOWERING SEVEN FEET INTO THE SKY, REACHING A WITHERED YET POWERFUL ARM IN THE PANTHER'S DIRECTION.. WARPED FINGERS CURLING TOWARD HIM--
--AND A VOICE COMES FROM THE LIPLESS MOUTH, A VOICE MOCKING WITH THE CHILL OF DEATH!
AHHH.. MY DEAR PANTHER.. WE'VE EXPECTED YOU WOULD SHOW HERE SOONER OR LATER
MYSELF AND THE OTHERS HAVE BEEN WAITING--
--QUITE IMPATIENTLY!
INSTINCTIVELY, THE PANTHER KNOWS: THIS IS THE VOICE OF
BARON MACABRE!


HIS ANIMAL SENSES RADIATE ALARMINGLY. IS THIS WHAT IT SEEMS OR MORE OF THE FRIGHT-SHOW THEATRICS OF KILLMONGER'S LEAGUE?
WE'VE PLANNED FOR YOUR ARRIVAL, OF COURSE.
THE BARON THANKS YOU FOR NOT DISAPPOINTING US.
DO YOU FEAR DEATH, MY REGAL MONARCH?
THE BARON DOES NOT FEAR DEATH... FOR DEATH EXISTS IN MY LIMBS--
--AND BURSTS OUTWARD TO CLAIM YOU AS ITS OWN!
WORDLESSLY, THE PANTHER DIVES INTO THE MIDST OF THE BURIAL SITE --
--AS A LETHAL, BURNING, SCORCHING RAY EMANATES FROM TALONED FINGERTIPS!
JAGGED SHARDS OF STONE SLICE INTO HIS BODY-- SCALDING FLAME SEARS HIS FLESH!
STONE AND EARTH CANNOT STOP DEATH FROM REACHING YOU, MY DEAR PANTHER.
SURELY YOU DIDN'T THINK IT COULD?
AHHH... HE LIES SO VERY STILL THERE. HE IS OURS FOR THE TAKING, MY DEATH REGIMENTS.
IT'S TOO BAD YOU CAN NO LONGER HEAR ME, MY NOCTURNAL ADVERSARY--
--FOR THERE ARE OTHER REASONS THE BARON DOES NOT FEAR DEATH!
FOR THE BARON IS EMISSARY OF DEATH INCARNATE--
--KING CADAVER!!
AND LIMBS, REEKING OF DAMP EARTH, CARRY THE PANTHER FORWARD-- AND THE BLOOD FROM HIS WOUNDS SPILLS ONTO THEIR HANDS!

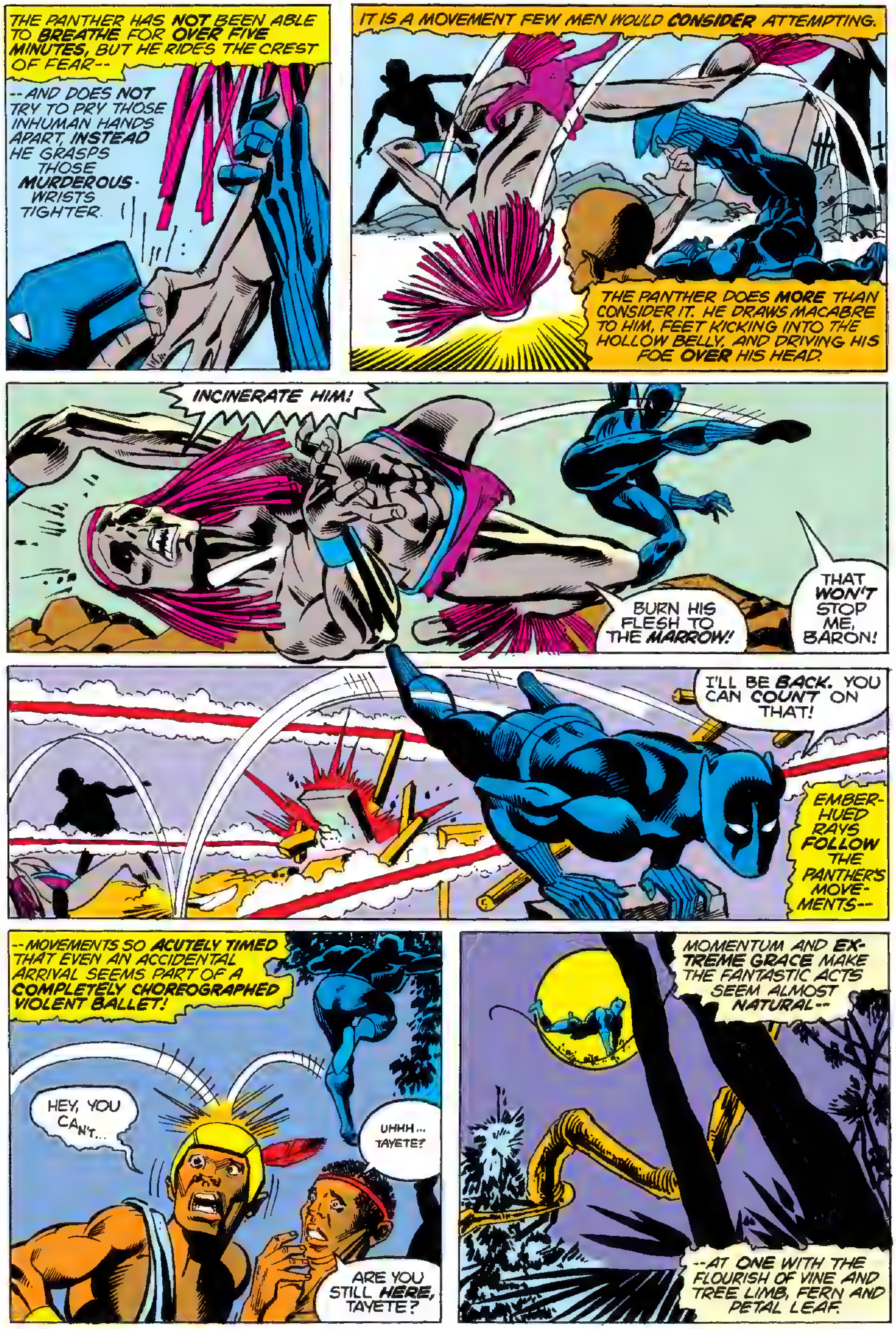
CONVERGING EVENTS. SO MANY OF THEM TAKING A VIOLENT TWIST IN WAKANDA THESE PAST FEW MONTHS--
--A SIMULTANEOUS DEATH MOSAIC THAT NOW INCLUDES ZATAMA.
ZATAMA, WHO WAS BORN NEAR THESE PALACE WALLS... THOUGH AT HIS BIRTH THERE WEREN'T ANY IMPOSING WALLS HERE, BUT ONLY THE FOLIAGE RISING IN SPLENDID COLOR ABOUT STRAW AND WOOD AND MUD-BAKED HUTS.
ZATAMA, WHOSE YOUNG EYES WATCHED THOSE STONE COLUMNS TAKE SHAPE... WHOSE PLAYGROUND THUNDERED WITH MECHANIZED HORRORS THAT WOKE HIM SCREAMING IN THE NIGHT.
TONIGHT, HE WILL DIE HERE.
HE SITS REFLECTIVELY. MIND IMAGES FLASH MENTAL RECORDINGS.
W'KABI, NEAR READY TO KILL VENOMM WHEN KILLMONGER SENT ONE OF HIS SUPERB SQUADRON, MALICE, TO FREE THE PANTHER'S PRISONER.
A SOFT, BUT INSISTENT, KNOCK AT HIS DOOR, INTERRUPTS HIS REVERIE.
PERHAPS, IT IS TAKU, HE THINKS, COME TO TRY AND QUIET THE INTENSE FUED BETWEEN HE AND W'KABI.
OR, PERHAPS IT IS... BUT HE SHRUGS THAT THOUGHT ASIDE.
TAKU, IS THAT YOU?
LOOK, I ALREADY KNOW THE...
WAIT...! PLEASE, WAIT! DON'T DO THIS!
PLEASE, DON'T DO THIS!
HE SCREAMS THE WORD PLEASE ONCE MORE, AN INSTINCTIVE WORD THAT HAS LITTLE OTHER MEANING.
ZATAMA WAS BORN NEAR THESE PALACE WALLS.
TONIGHT, HE HAS DIED HERE.



LIKE PIECES OF AN ERRATIC PUZZLE REFUSING TO LINK INTO ONE PICTURE, THE DEATH-MOSAIC SPREADS OUTWARD.
A SEGMENT OF THE MOSAIC RECALLS ZATAMA SPEAKING SARDONICALLY, "THE SPEARS ARE BREAKING APART ABOUT YOU, AREN'T THEY, T'CHALLA?"
IT WOULD CERTAINLY APPEAR THEY HAVE!
YOU NEVER HAD A CHANCE, MY POOR KINGLY WRETCH.
YOU DON'T SAY?
OH... YOU DO SAY?
NOW THAT IS TRULY AN AMAZING STUNT, HURTING AS YOU MUST BE!
WELL SOMEHOW, BARON, I HARDLY THINK THAT'LL BOTHER YOU MUCH LONGER.
AHHH... I THOUGHT YOUR DEMISE A BIT TOO EASY.
THAT WAS, INDEED, A CLEVER RUSE!
I REALLY ENJOYED IT, MY DEAR PANTHER!
I REALLY DID!
BUT THE TIME FOR HUMOR IS PAST--
--AND ONE DOES NOT TOUCH DEATH--
DEATH TOUCHES OTHERS!
BONE SEEMS TO GLINT BENEATH MACABRE'S PARCHMENT-DRIED FLESH, BUT THE ARM IS LIKE COILED WIRE, SWEEPING OUT, TEARING THE PANTHER'S GRIP FROM THE MOLD-SLICK, GAUNT FORM!



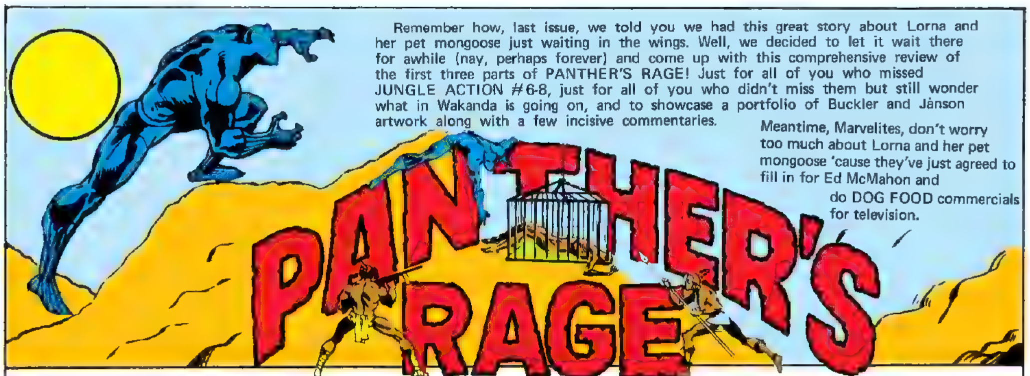
HIS BACK IS SLICK WITH THE BLOOD THAT THROBS FROM THE WOUND CARVED INTO HIS FLESH BY MACABRE'S DEATH-BLAZE... AND HE CANNOT PRY THOSE DECAYING FINGERS FROM HIS THROAT.
FEEL THE TOUCH OF DEATH NOW-- FOR THE POWER OF BARON MACABRE IS DEATH ITSELF--
-AND THE BARON IS THE INSTRUMENT OF DEATH TO ANY WHO WOULD ENTER THE KING'S DOMAIN!
YELLOWED TEETH FILL THE PANTHER'S BLURRING VISION.
DARKENED, SUNKEN EYE-SOCKETS KINDLE A MAD BLAZE DEEP IN THEIR INTERIOR.
THERE IS A FEELING OF MORTALITY WHEN ONE ENTERS A NORMAL PLACE SET ASIDE FOR THE DEAD. THIS PLACE RADIATES SOMETHING FAR LESS SUBTLE.
THE TWO FIGURES THAT MOVE ALONG THE OUTER RIM OF THIS TRY MOVING WITH FURTIVE STEALTH. AND THEY ARE FAILING...
...MISERABLY.
I HEARD SOMETHING, TAYETE. DON'T YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?
HEAR WHAT? I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING, KAZIBE.
IT... IT'S COMING FROM OVER THERE.
THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, KAZIBE. YOU AREN'T EVER GOING TO GET ANYWHERE WITH KILLMONGER 'CAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID OF EVERYTHING.
AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF THIS BARON MACABRE?
I'M NOT AFRAID OF HIM. I'M NOT AFRAID OF THAT PANTHER DEVIL. THING IS, KAZIBE, THEY BETTER FEAR ME.
EVERY TIME YOU SAY THINGS LIKE THAT, TAYETE... WE END UP GETTING STOMPED ON, AND I...
...I... I...
TAYETE, TELL ME YOU DON'T SEE WHAT I SEE.
IN FACT, TELL ME I DON'T SEE WHAT I SEE.
KAZIBE?
I'M SEEING IT, AREN'T I?


THE PANTHER HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO BREATHE FOR OVER FIVE MINUTES, BUT HE RIDES THE CREST OF FEAR--
--AND DOES NOT TRY TO PRY THOSE INHUMAN HANDS APART. INSTEAD HE GRASPS THOSE MURDEROUS WRISTS TIGHTER.
IT IS A MOVEMENT FEW MEN WOULD CONSIDER ATTEMPTING.
THE PANTHER DOES MORE THAN CONSIDER IT. HE DRAWS MACABRE TO HIM, FEET KICKING INTO THE HOLLOW BELLY, AND DRIVING HIS FOE OVER HIS HEAD.
INCINERATE HIM!
BURN HIS FLESH TO THE MARROW!
THAT WON'T STOP ME, BARON!
I'LL BE BACK. YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT!
EMBER-HUED RAYS FOLLOW THE PANTHER'S MOVEMENTS--
--MOVEMENTS SO ACUTELY TIMED THAT EVEN AN ACCIDENTAL ARRIVAL SEEMS PART OF A COMPLETELY CHOREOGRAPHED VIOLENT BALLET!
HEY, YOU CAN'T...
UHHH... TAYETE?
ARE YOU STILL HERE, TAYETE?
MOMENTUM AND EXTREME GRACE MAKE THE FANTASTIC ACTS SEEM ALMOST NATURAL--
--AT ONE WITH THE FLOURISH OF VINE AND TREE LIMB, FERN AND PETAL LEAF.

HE DOES NOT HAVE TO TALK ABOUT BEING ONE WITH NATURE.
A HALF HOUR PASSES, AND HE IS A HUMAN IN FLIGHT--
--WHO DROPS SWIFTLY WHEN HE REACHES THE OUTER PARAPETS OF THE PALACE ROYAL.
HE HAS BARELY ENTERED THE WINDOW WHEN W'KABI'S HARSH VOICE FILLS THE CHAMBER INTERIOR.
W'KABI! TAKU!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING MONICA... AND WHY?
I'VE WARNED YOU BEFORE, W'KABI. I WON'T HAVE MY GUESTS MISTREATED.
YOU'D BEST HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR YOUR ACTIONS.
IS THIS REASON GOOD ENOUGH, MY CHIEFTAIN? SHE MURDERED ZATAMA!
YOU HAVE ALLOWED THIS OUTWORLDER TO DESECRATE SACRED RITES... IT IS ONLY LAST NIGHT YOU FINISHED THE SACROSANCT PANTHER CEREMONY!
YOU HAVE ALLOWED HER PRESENCE IN TRIBUNAL MATTERS. YET TIME AND AGAIN YOU DEFEND HER.
BUT NO LONGER, MY CHIEFTAIN.
TONIGHT, SHE MURDERED ZATAMA--
--AND HER FINGERPRINTS ARE ALL OVER THE SPEAR THAT STOLE ZATAMA'S LIFE!
NEXT
KING CADAVER IS DEAD
...AND LIVING IN WAKANDA!
KING CADAVER: HE'LL STEAL YOUR MIND! HE'LL STEAL YOUR SOUL! AND THEN, IF YOU'RE LUCKY, HE'LL STEAL YOUR LIFE!
NEXT

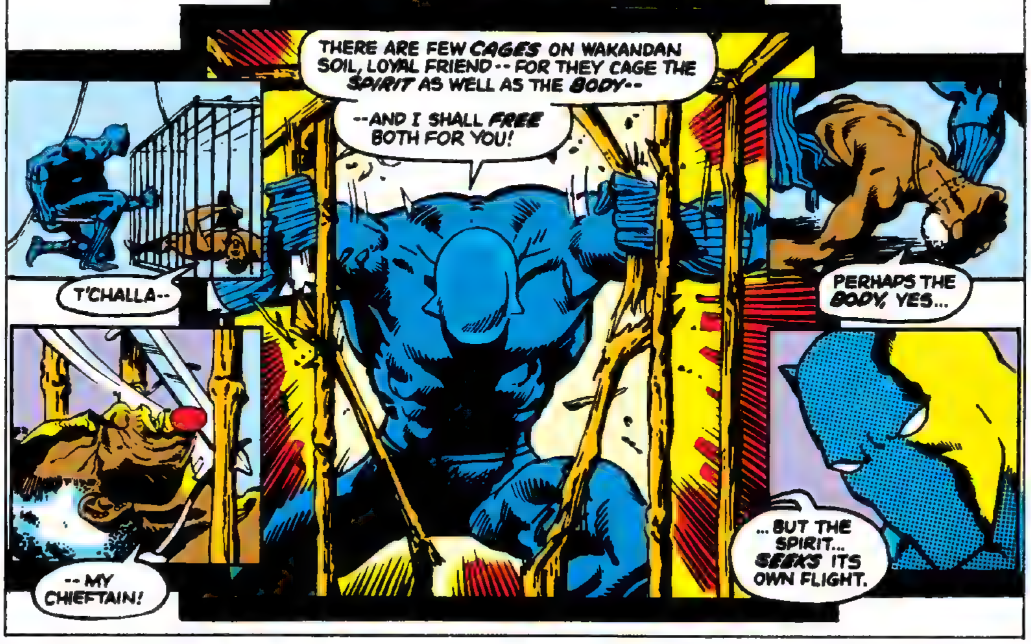
Remember how, last issue, we told you we had this great story about Lorna and her pet mongoose just waiting in the wings. Well, we decided to let it wait there for awhile (nay, perhaps forever) and come up with this comprehensive review of the first three parts of PANTHER'S RAGE! Just for all of you who missed JUNGLE ACTION #6-8, just for all of you who didn't miss them but still wonder what in Wakanda is going on, and to showcase a portfolio of Buckler and Janson artwork along with a few incisive commentaries.

Meantime, Marvelites, don't worry too much about Lorna and her pet mongoose 'cause they've just agreed to fill in for Ed McMahon and do DOG FOOD commercials for television.

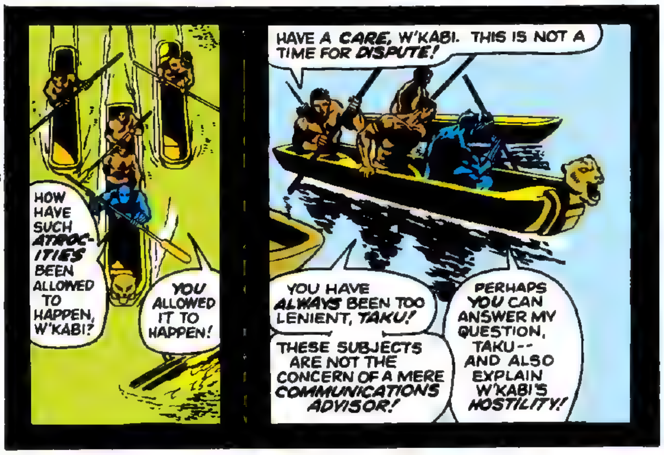


And now, onward with the incisive commentary. This is the Panther's first meeting with Tayete. We think Tayete got the Ka-Chok here, but he probably didn't understand a word the Panther was saying.

BEHIND THE SCENES, IF ANYONE CARES DEPT.: When this sequence first appeared in J.A. #6, it bordered the top of page four. Just to give you a brief insight in how close a collaboration this story was between artist and writer, we give you Rich Buckler and Don McGregor, sitting in Rich's apartment, downing iced Pepsis in a single gulp. Don wanted a dynamic opening panel of the Panther freeing the old man Tayete and Kazibe had been torturing, Rich came up with adding the two small panels on the right hand side of that panel and then Don, leaping up, spilling the one Pepsi he hadn't downed, suggested balancing the effect with the two small panels on the left. Now didn't all of the above just grab you, Gang?



That meeting with Tayete and Kazibe was the Panther's first experience with the minions of Killmonger. It wasn't to be his last.



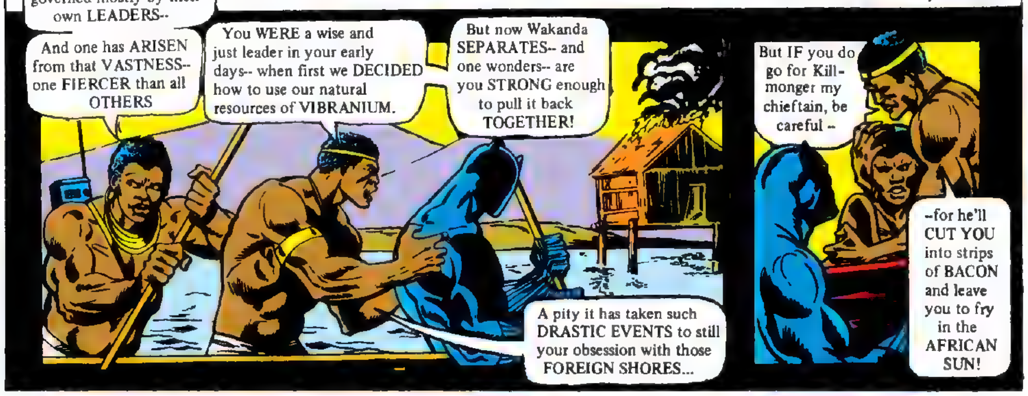
Shortly thereafter, Killmonger's guerrilla forces slaughtered an entire fishing colony. With W'kabi, Head of Court Security, and Taku, his Communications Commander, they visited the grim scene. It became grimmer still, when the Panther learned that the entire act of cal lous carnage had been done only to divert him from the scene of Killmonger's latest operation at Warrior Falls!

"Wakanda *expands*, T'Challa!

There are *many* small villages as this one.

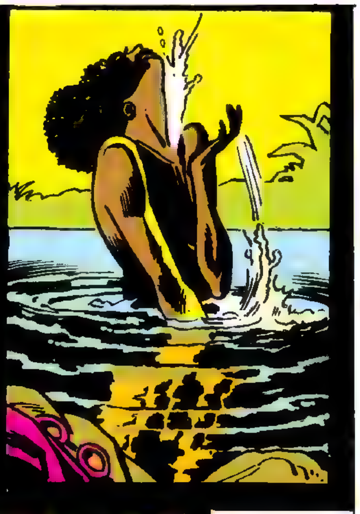
"*Consider*...When was the *last* time you visited any of the *isolated mountain* settlements?"

This Killmonger is one of the baddest dudes walking. But W'Kabi tells the story better.

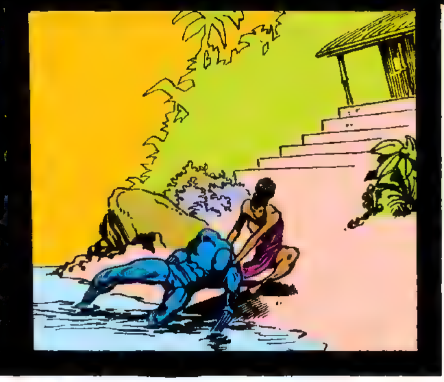


The shot to the left here is not one of T'Challa's favorite candid snaps. It's the conclusion of his first battle with Killmonger (and his only actual physical battle thus far).

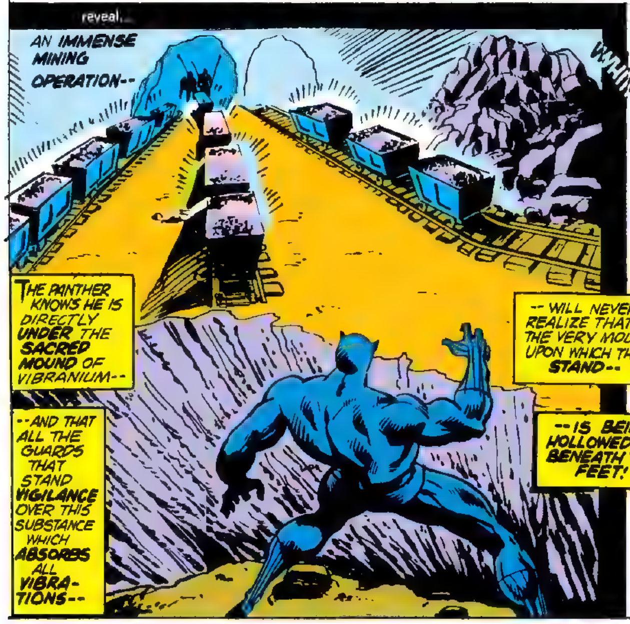
The shot to the right here is one of T'Challa's favorite candid snaps. It's also one of Don's and Rich's and Klaus'...but you get the picture. Killmonger thought that throwing the Panther over those savage falls would take the Wakandan King out of any picture, but keeping himself from panic, calculating, twisting agilely to avoid being ripped to shreds upon the jagged rocks, the Panther survived.



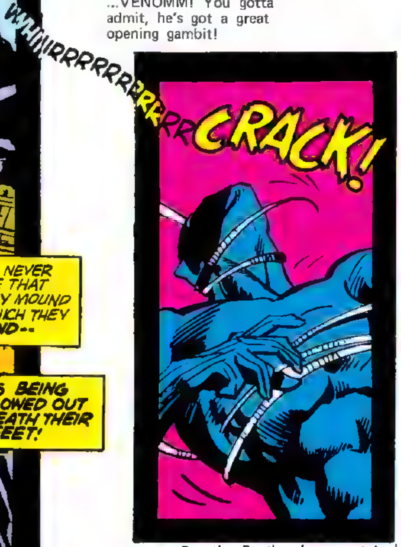
And the River of Grace and Wisdom carried him toward Monica Lynne.



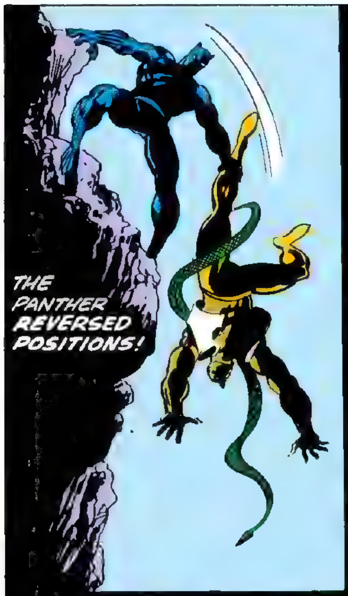
Not long after, the Panther in true hero fashion,dis-covers what Killmonger is up to at Warrior Falls, following the grotesque Death REgiments to hidden underground caverns that reveal...



And then, the Panther has his first meeting with one of Killmonger's lieutenants ...VENOMM! You gotta admit, he's got a great opening gambit!



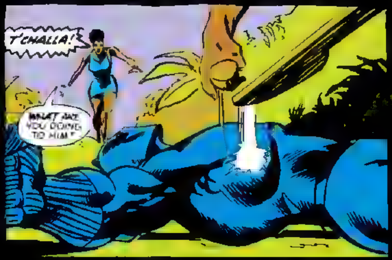
But the Panther has a great closing gambit and it isn't long before...



The conflict spreads. The Panther undergoes the sacred rituals that give him his powers, but Killmonger is also moving his forces that night, sending the incredibly lithe and strong Malice to the Palace Royal.

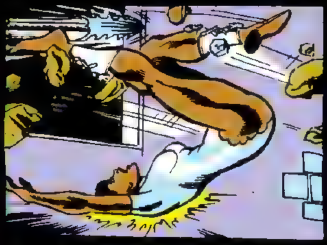
And while Malice attempts to free Venomm, Monica stumbles upon the sacrosanct rites. It is a clash of cultures, now at a focal point.

Monica interrupts the ceremony, not realizing its religious importance, not understanding the cultural significance of this rite. Fear for the Panther's life moves her into the midst of the inner circle. The Tribunal Presence in turn reacts with unreasoning hostility.

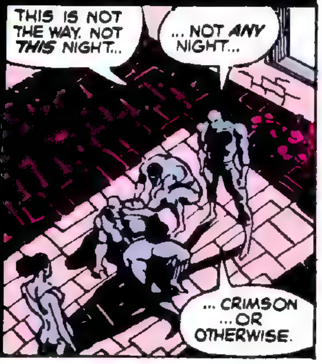


And the Panther is caught between two conflicting forces, not realizing a third waits for him at the Palace Royal.

Malice escapes into the crimson night, to rejoin Killmonger's forces.



And the Panther stops W'Kabi from killing VENOMM.



And there you have it, straight from the files of the Wakanda Con, Effendi. We hope you enjoyed this portfolio, along with the chance to see some of this artwork in different sizes and formats than it was when originally published. And just to make a note, our letters page, JUNGLE REACTION, follows. Why not drop us some lines yourself about this feature but, especially about, "But Now The Spears Are Broken!" We'll be waiting. Don't let us down, hear?

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dear Roy, Don, Rich:

The saga of BLACK PANTHER versus KILLRAVEN grows...an event which delights and surprises me both. I see that a series of stories is under way about the insurrection in Wakanda, and that last issue's all too brief encounter between PANTHER and his foe was only an overture. With Venomm we have the first, I hope of many movements. The story was deftly plotted, brilliantly drawn, and although those captions filled the jungle air like mosquitoes, their sting was a minor nuisance. (I might add that the writing within them was poetically turned ...not stilted as most of Marvel's umptillion captions are. Good job, Don.) My only complaint is that the battle between PANTHER and Venomm was all too brief ...I could see it spread over ten pages of reptilian action (on a greater scale, that is, ha ha) without becoming sloppy. I only hope Venomm will reappear, since he's most interesting. And another hope: that in the movement to come, MALICE will not be the last in this orchestral feat ...that KILLRAVEN will threaten Wakanda for many issues to come. Last issue spoke of him as a power to be feared...by which I feel that it'll take more than a couple of fast Afro uppercuts to eliminate him from those steamy shores.

Guy Lillian III
on the road in
Houston, Texas

Never mind a few fast Afro uppercuts, Guy. The way things are going now a few fast things like that wouldn't even bother our insurrectionist's underlings. And we purposefully left your referring to KILLMONGER as KILLRAVEN through-out your critique only to show what Don goes through when he switches over to scripting WAR OF THE WORLDS. We continually hear him muttering, "Killraven... It's Killraven...No, Erik. No, Monger!" So don't feel to badly about the mistake.

Anyhow, as you've witnessed, the conflict in Wakanda continues to rage, taking on new facets with each issue. With so much happening in Wakanda these days we've just had the chance to get back to that weapon question brought up in JUNGLE ACTION #6, and that in turn will lead into another revelation that'll be revealed in the next issue.

Along with that surprise, the strip changes artists again (it's called artist roulette here at the Bullpen), but we think our new Panther artist will keep this book as visually distinctive as Rich Buckler did for the first three and Gil Kane did for this issue. The man we've been building up to is the ever irreverent Billy Graham, who takes over the pencils in "King Cadaver is Dead and Living in Wakanda!"

And now on to a letter that knocked Don and Rich and Klaus out. They don't know whether to believe it or if someone is putting them on. But we'll let you make your own choice, Effendi.

Dear Don, Rich, Klaus, Tom, Glynis, and Roy: (With apologies to Sigman and Lai):

HOW DO I BEGIN?

To write a letter on how good a mag can
be?
That great BLACK PANTHER strip I pay
two dimes to see?
—(each two months)
About an awesome nation surely dear to
me;
How do I start?
—with the wondrous art!
The Buckler/Janson team-up's like some
melody;
The artwork makes a Wrightson bend a
trembling knee
—(Adam's too)
And Don's great scripts outweigh (in
depth) the Baltic Sea—
—It's Marvel's best.
'Cause it's original
No "white man grows up in Jungle bull"
Monica Lynne's a perfect touch
So anywhere he goes, he never tires with
Wakanda.
How could he tire?
He'll reach for his land—it's always there.
—How can this strip miss?
The art's terrific and the story line fine;
The book'll become a classic
Somewhere down the line
—(Yes it will)
The book will sell, and you'll get letters
just like mine.
—You'll do just fine!

RKO, KOF, QNS(?) JOHN CLIFTON
110-57 Union Hall Street
Queens, New York 11433

**When Don was young, Roy gave him a
reprint book
And slowly spake: this book must live!
(And so it did. And so it did. And so it
did. And so it did!)
And in this book for which the words you
are to write in
Give the Panther a try. (Band sock home
melody)
So the book will not die!
Thus, Lorna, Jann and Tharn gave way to
the Wonderful World of Wakanda...
and the Panther strikes (Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba,
Bump) like Thunderball.
(Wha—??)**

Dear Roy, Don, Rich, Klaus, Tom, Glynis, and, of course, Stan,

JUNGLE ACTION #7 is sensational! The Panther is being portrayed brilliantly by Rich and Klaus. Rarely have I seen so spectacular a two page spread in pages 2 and 3. Klaus, you are one of the finest inkers I have seen.

I find the story revolutionary as well, Don. Tanzika's "You talk most strangely, Miss Lynne" should prove that Africans in Africa are different from Afro-Americans. Unfortunately, some people feel that all Blacks do is shout slogans.

PMM, GARY FRAZIER
3375 University St.
Eugene, Oregon 98405

That's some heavy praise, Gary, and we appreciate it. Much of the Panther has been a team effort, especially the title pages that you mention. Don originally had the idea to have the waterfall sequence spread over the two pages, incorporating the title page design. But he had only the idea of one panel with the Panther in different positions going down the falls. Rich socked it up close by inserting separate panels, and Klaus finished it off. Don't you just love these behind the scenes type things, Gang?

Dear Don, Rich, Klaus, and friends,

JUNGLE ACTION #6 was a masterpiece. Don, you were right to concentrate upon his role as king of the Wakandas. The recent tendency to concentrate exclusively upon his role as a super hero has made him into just another costumed cut-up, totally lacking in individuality, useful only in making a change in costumes appearing in the Avenger's lineup. Now we encounter some very subtle characterizations, and a careful study into such themes as the necessity for a good government, the duty of man to his fellow men, and the essential character of nobility. Keep up the good work.

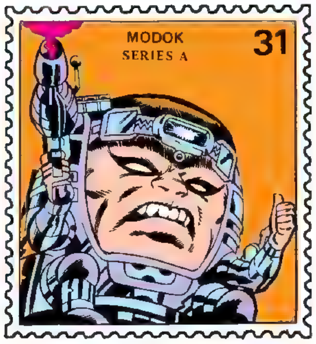
Bill Clodius
54 West Stephen Dr.
Newark, De. 19711

We'll try, Bill. And we're trying to provide a little bit of something for everyone. If someone wants to read the Panther as as straight jungle action type story, we hope it succeeds on that level; but for those of you out there who want a little bit more, we hope we've managed to work that into the strip too. If they all mesh (and only you, the readers, can tell us if they do), it should give the Panther a wide audience.

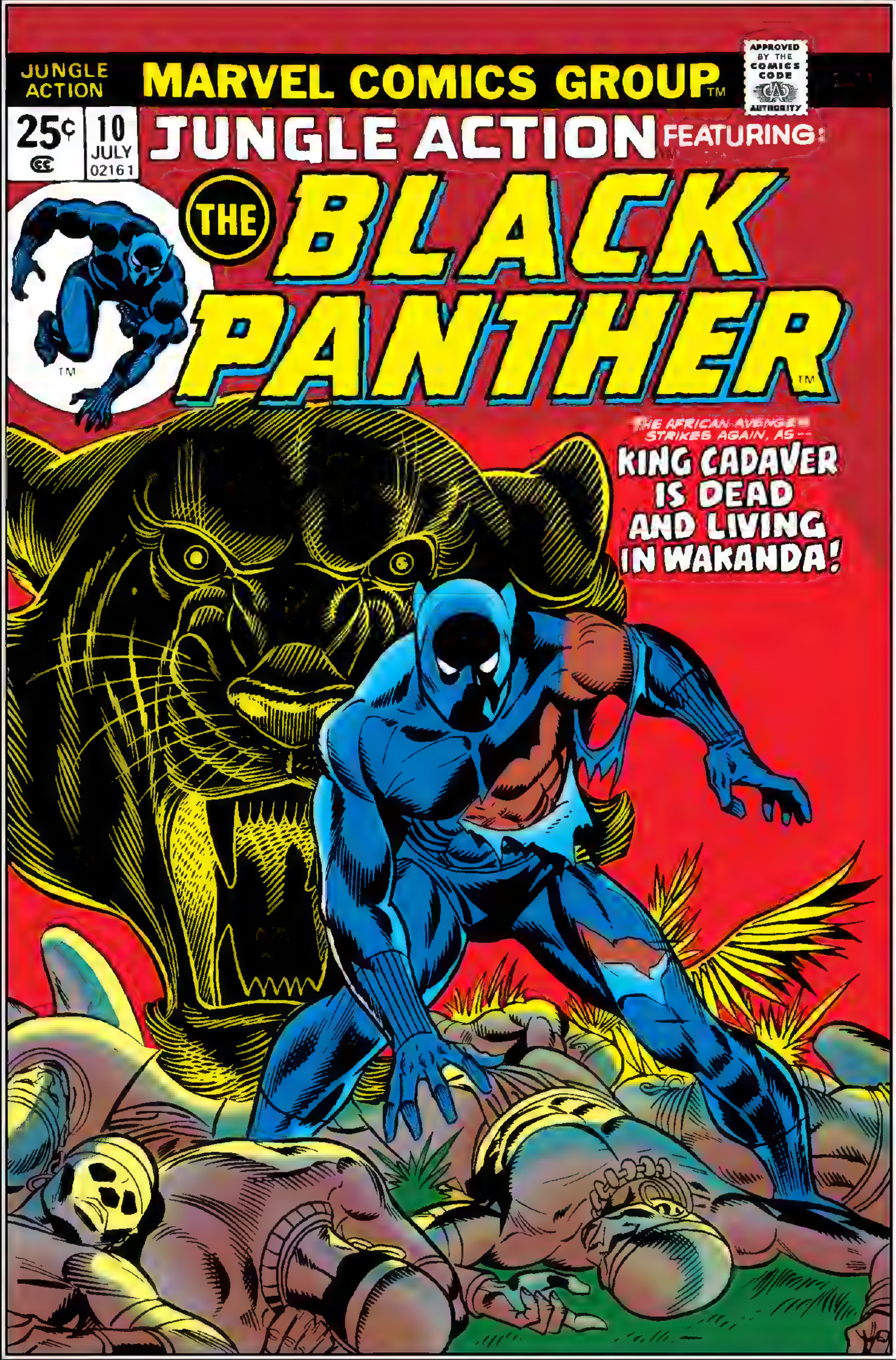
THIS IS IT! YOUR

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE!



CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM!


JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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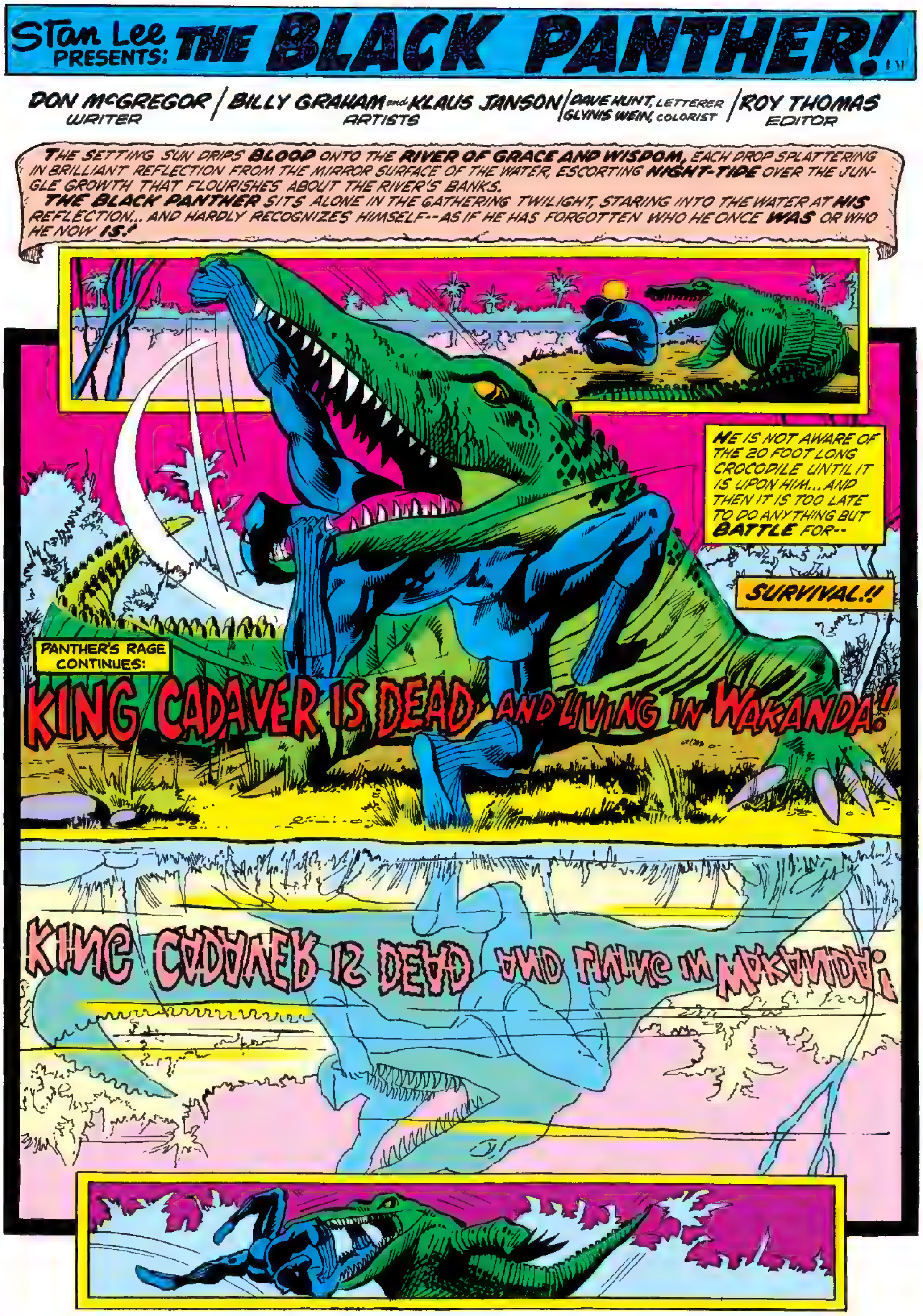
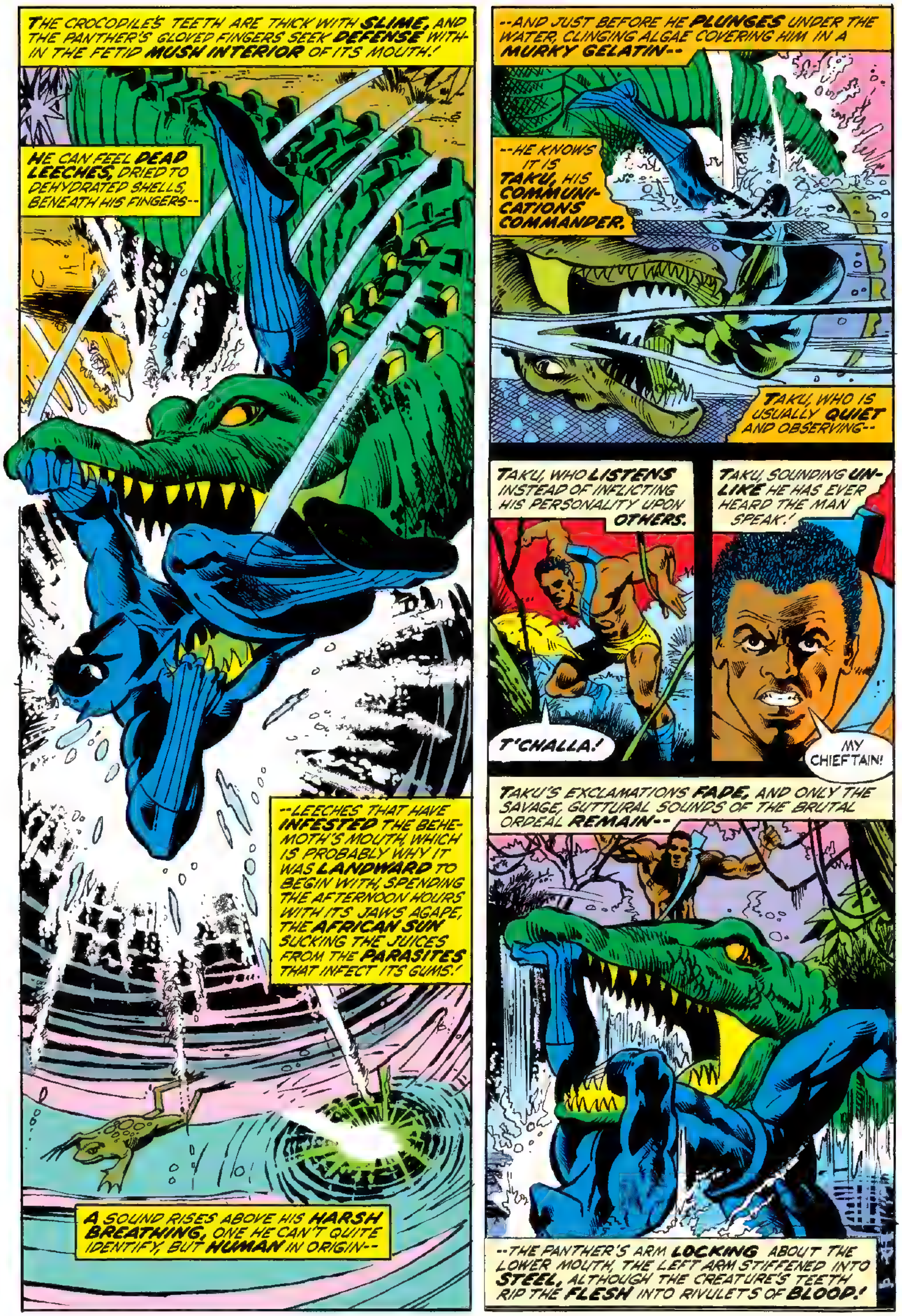
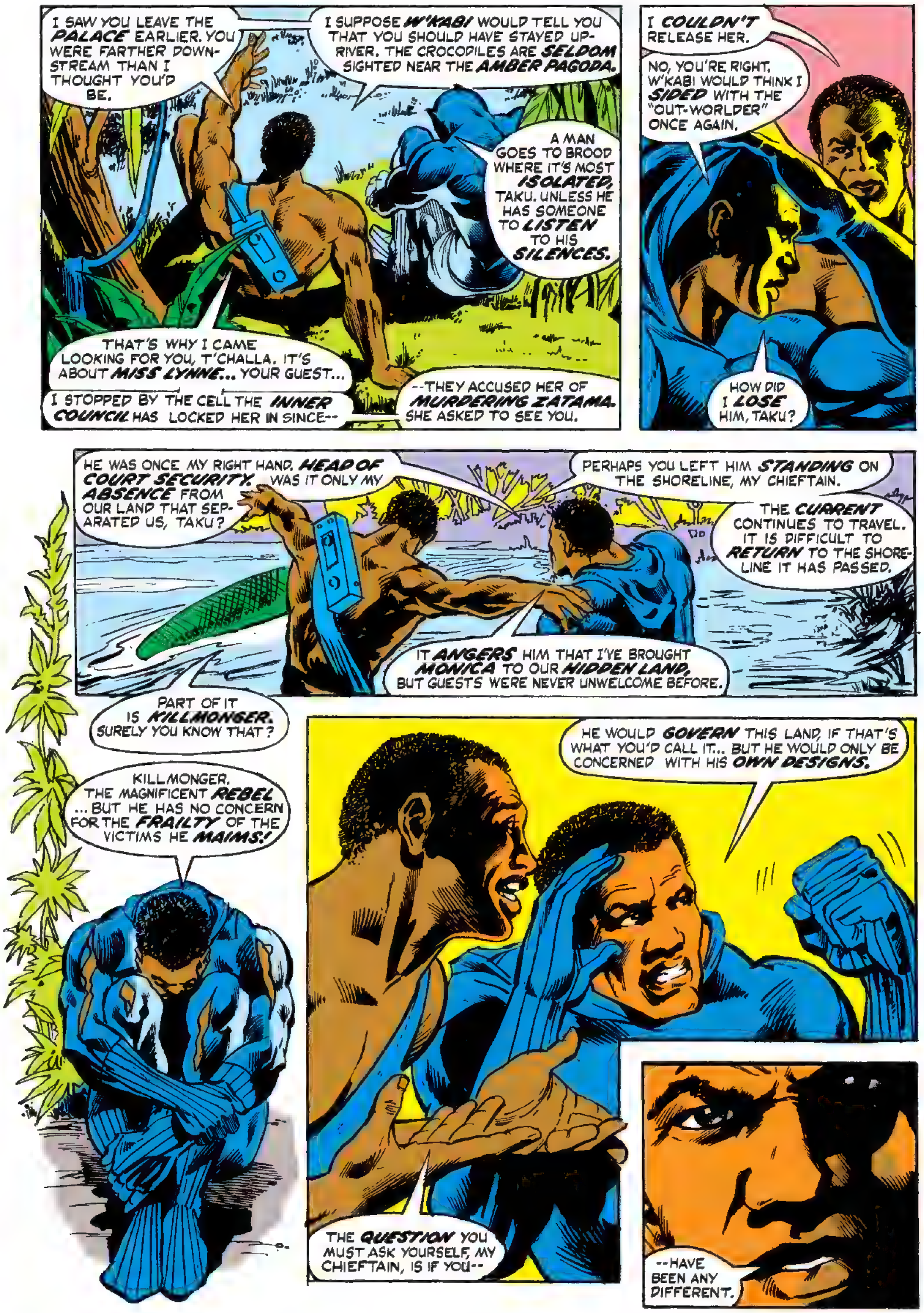
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
THE AFRICAN AVENGER STRIKES AGAIN, AS--
KING CADAVER IS DEAD AND LIVING IN WAKANDA!

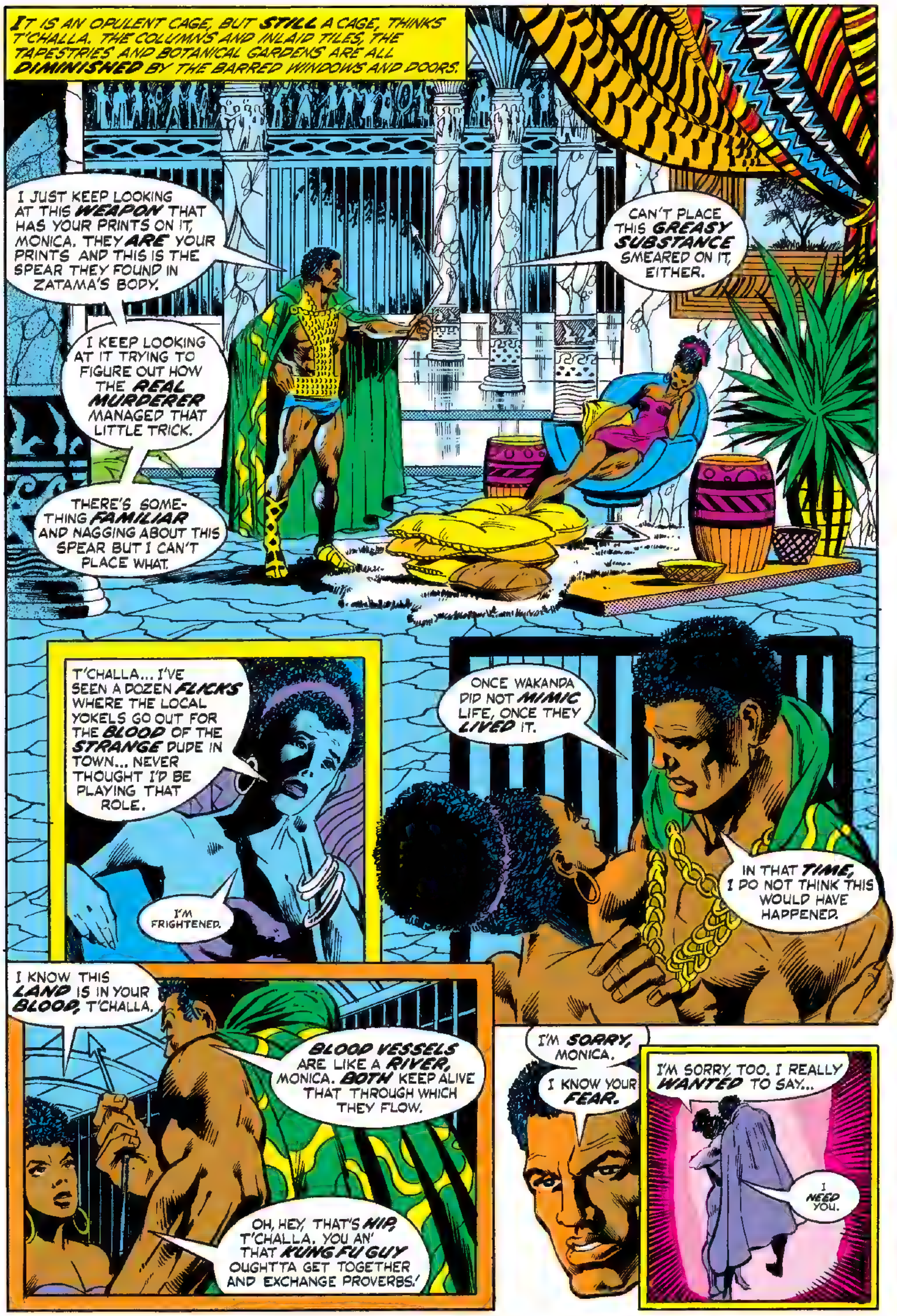

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER! TM
DON McGREGOR WRITER / BILLY GRAHAM and KLAUS JANSON ARTISTS / DAVE HUNT, LETTERER GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST / ROY THOMAS EDITOR
THE SETTING SUN DRIPS BLOOD ONTO THE RIVER OF GRACE AND WISDOM, EACH DROP SPLATTERING IN BRILLIANT REFLECTION FROM THE MIRROR SURFACE OF THE WATER, ESCORTING NIGHT-TIDE OVER THE JUNGLE GROWTH THAT FLOURISHES ABOUT THE RIVER'S BANKS. THE BLACK PANTHER SITS ALONE IN THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, STARING INTO THE WATER AT HIS REFLECTION... AND HARDLY RECOGNIZES HIMSELF--AS IF HE HAS FORGOTTEN WHO HE ONCE WAS OR WHO HE NOW IS!
HE IS NOT AWARE OF THE 20 FOOT LONG CROCODILE UNTIL IT IS UPON HIM... AND THEN IT IS TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING BUT BATTLE FOR--
SURVIVAL!!
PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES:
KING CADAVER IS DEAD AND LIVING IN WAKANDA!

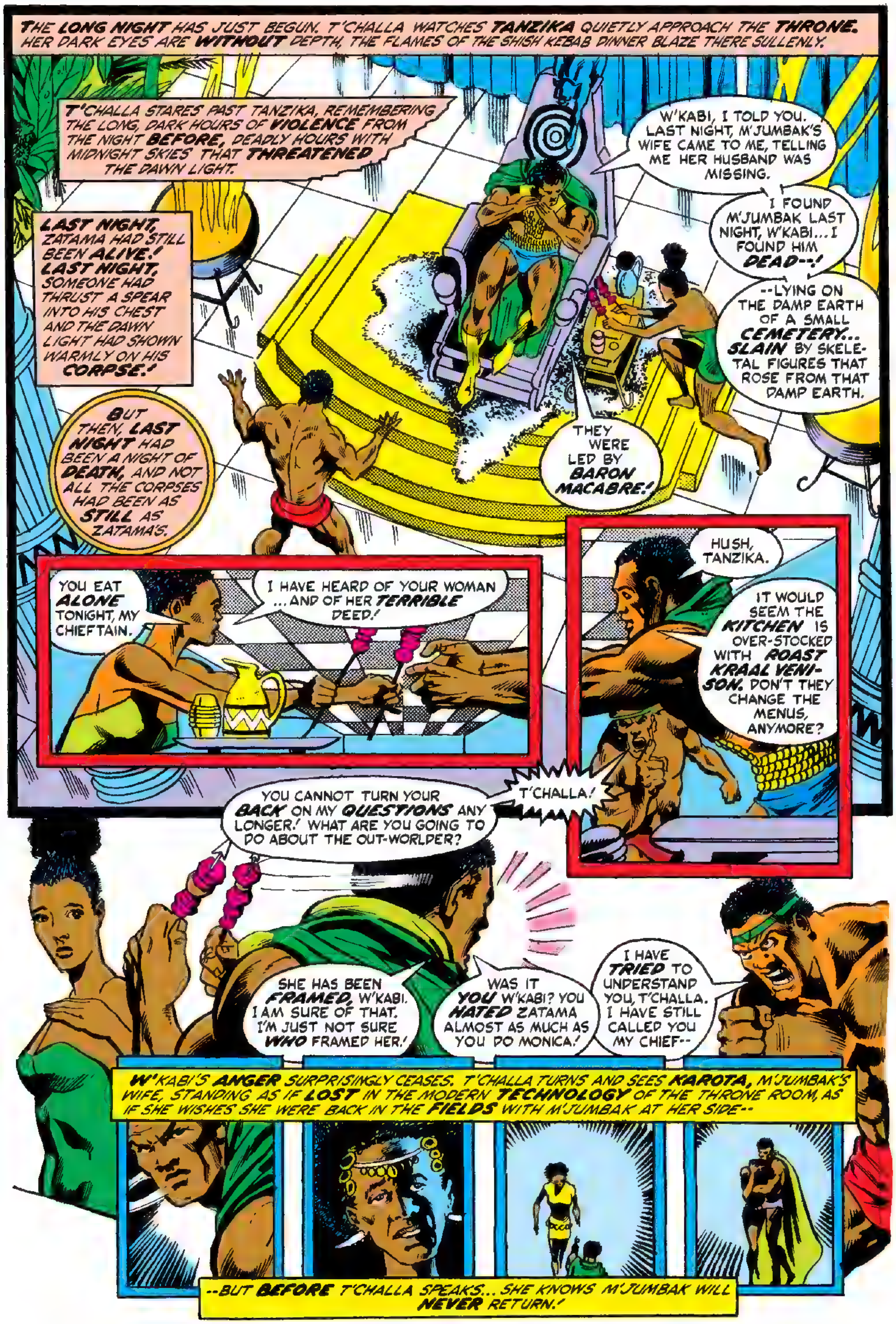


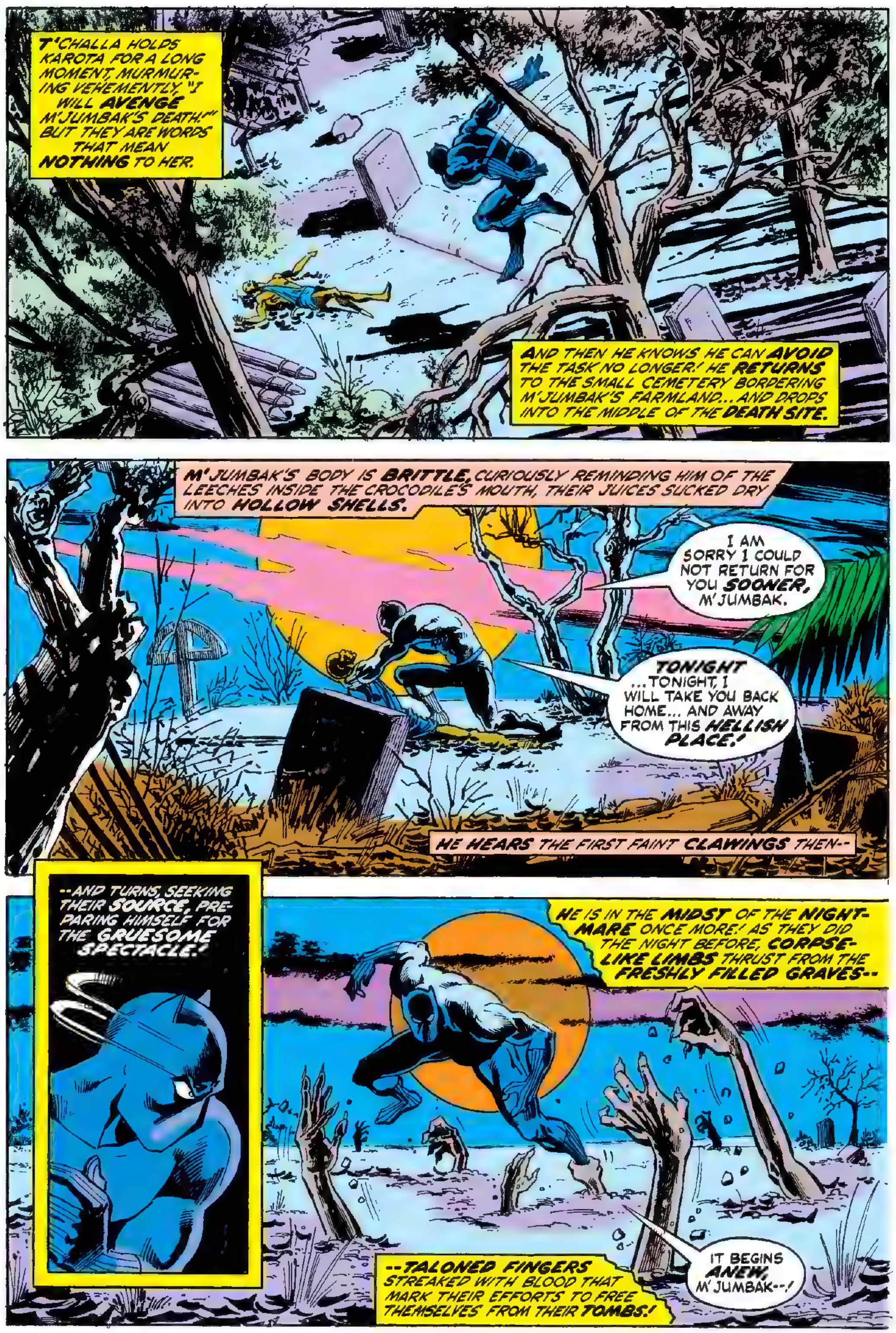
THE CROCODILE'S TEETH ARE THICK WITH SLIME, AND THE PANTHER'S GLOVED FINGERS SEEK DEFENSE WITHIN THE FETID MUSH INTERIOR OF ITS MOUTH!
HE CAN FEEL DEAD LEECHES, DRIED TO DEHYDRATED SHELLS, BENEATH HIS FINGERS--
--LEECHES THAT HAVE INFESTED THE BEHEMOTH'S MOUTH, WHICH IS PROBABLY WHY IT WAS LANDWARD TO BEGIN WITH, SPENDING THE AFTERNOON HOURS WITH ITS JAWS AGAPE, THE AFRICAN SUN SUCKING THE JUICES FROM THE PARASITES THAT INFECT ITS GUMS!
A SOUND RISES ABOVE HIS HARSH BREATHING, ONE HE CAN'T QUITE IDENTIFY, BUT HUMAN IN ORIGIN--
--AND JUST BEFORE HE PLUNGES UNDER THE WATER, CLINGING ALGAE COVERING HIM IN A MURKY GELATIN--
--HE KNOWS IT IS TAKU, HIS COMMUNICATIONS COMMANDER.
TAKU, WHO IS USUALLY QUIET AND OBSERVING--
TAKU, WHO LISTENS INSTEAD OF INFLICTING HIS PERSONALITY UPON OTHERS.
T'CHALLA!
TAKU, SOUNDING UNLIKE HE HAS EVER HEARD THE MAN SPEAK!
MY CHIEFTAIN!
TAKU'S EXCLAMATIONS FADE, AND ONLY THE SAVAGE, GUTTURAL SOUNDS OF THE BRUTAL ORDEAL REMAIN--
--THE PANTHER'S ARM LOCKING ABOUT THE LOWER MOUTH, THE LEFT ARM STIFFENED INTO STEEL, ALTHOUGH THE CREATURE'S TEETH RIP THE FLESH INTO RIVULETS OF BLOOD!

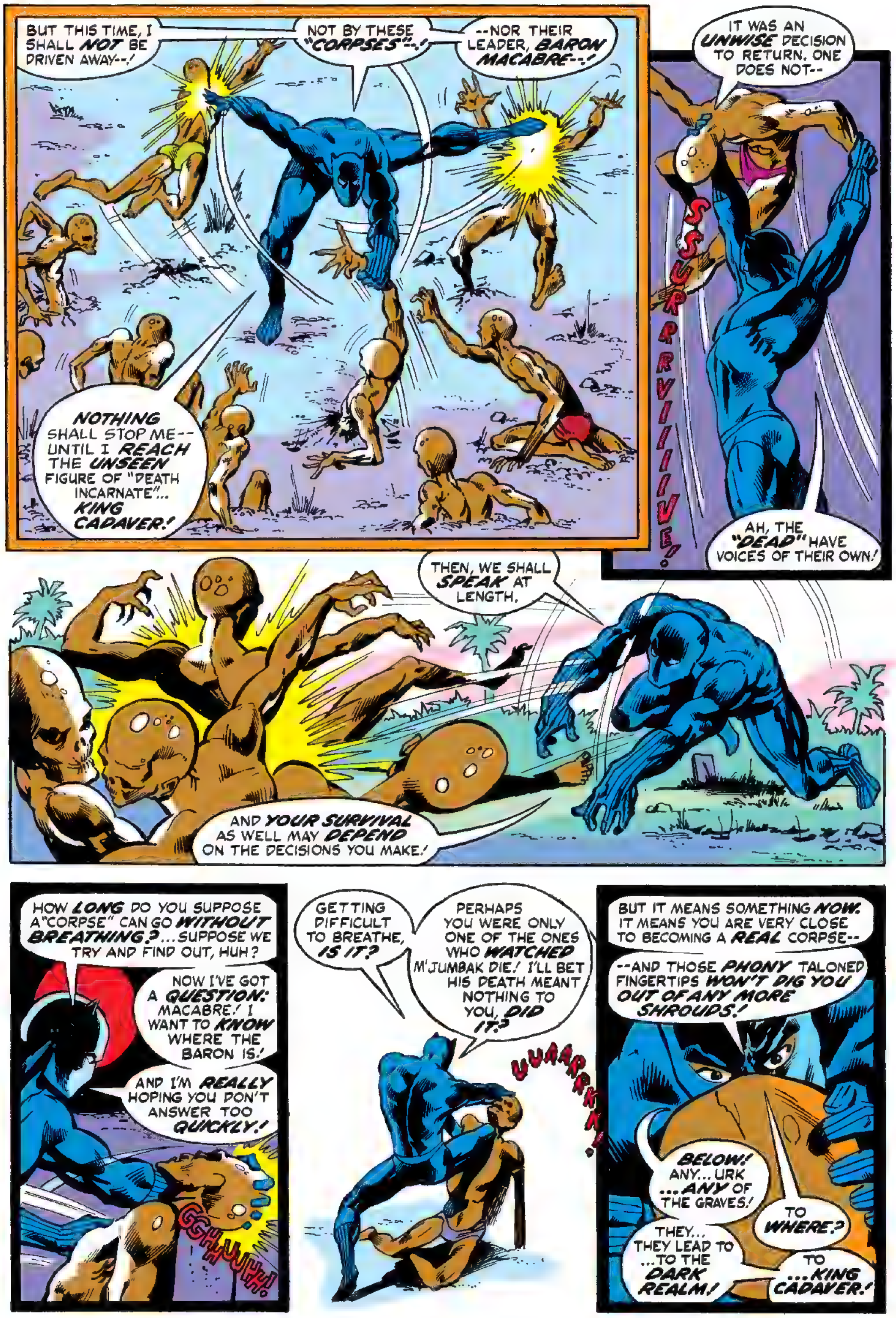
THE BEAST'S SCALES ARE CUTTING EDGES THAT WELT HIS FLESH, TEARING HIS UNIFORM INTO BLOODIED TATTERS!
THE MONSTROUS TAIL LASHES IN DEADLY FRENZY, WHIPPING THE WATER TO FOAM, FRAGMENTING ITS REFLECTIONS--
--AND STRANGELY, IN THAT MOMENT, THEY ARE IMAGES THAT HAVE A STABBING CLARITY THE MIRROR-PERFECT FIGURE LACKED!
PAIN BIRTHS INSANITY WITHIN HIS MIND... AND DESPERATION IS THE MID-WIFE.
HIS BOOTS PURPOSEFULLY GOUGE INTO THE YIELDING, SALIVATING MOUTH, AND ITS TONGUE BULGES BENEATH AND AROUND HIS HEELS!
HOLD ON! PLEASE, HOLD ON! HIS MIND-VOICE SCREAMS IN RELENTLESS SURVIVAL COMMANDS.
FOR JUST A MOMENT MORE... ONLY A MOMENT... MORE!
AND THEN HIS LEGS DRIVE UPWARD INTO THE LOWER MOUTH, HIS ARMS MIRACULOUSLY KEEPING THE UPPER JAW APART.
THE TERRIBLE SNAPPING SOUND IS MAGNIFIED IN HIS EARS.
DEATH-AGONY PLAYS ITS AGELESS LAST MOMENTS--
--AND NOW IT IS NOT THE DYING SUN THAT COLORS THE WATER AN ANEMIC PINK!
T'CHALLA. MY HAND!
TAKE MY HAND.
TAKU? IS THAT YOU--?
--OR MERELY ANOTHER... FRAGMENTED VISION?
COME, MY CHIEFTAIN.
REST HERE UPON THE GRASS.

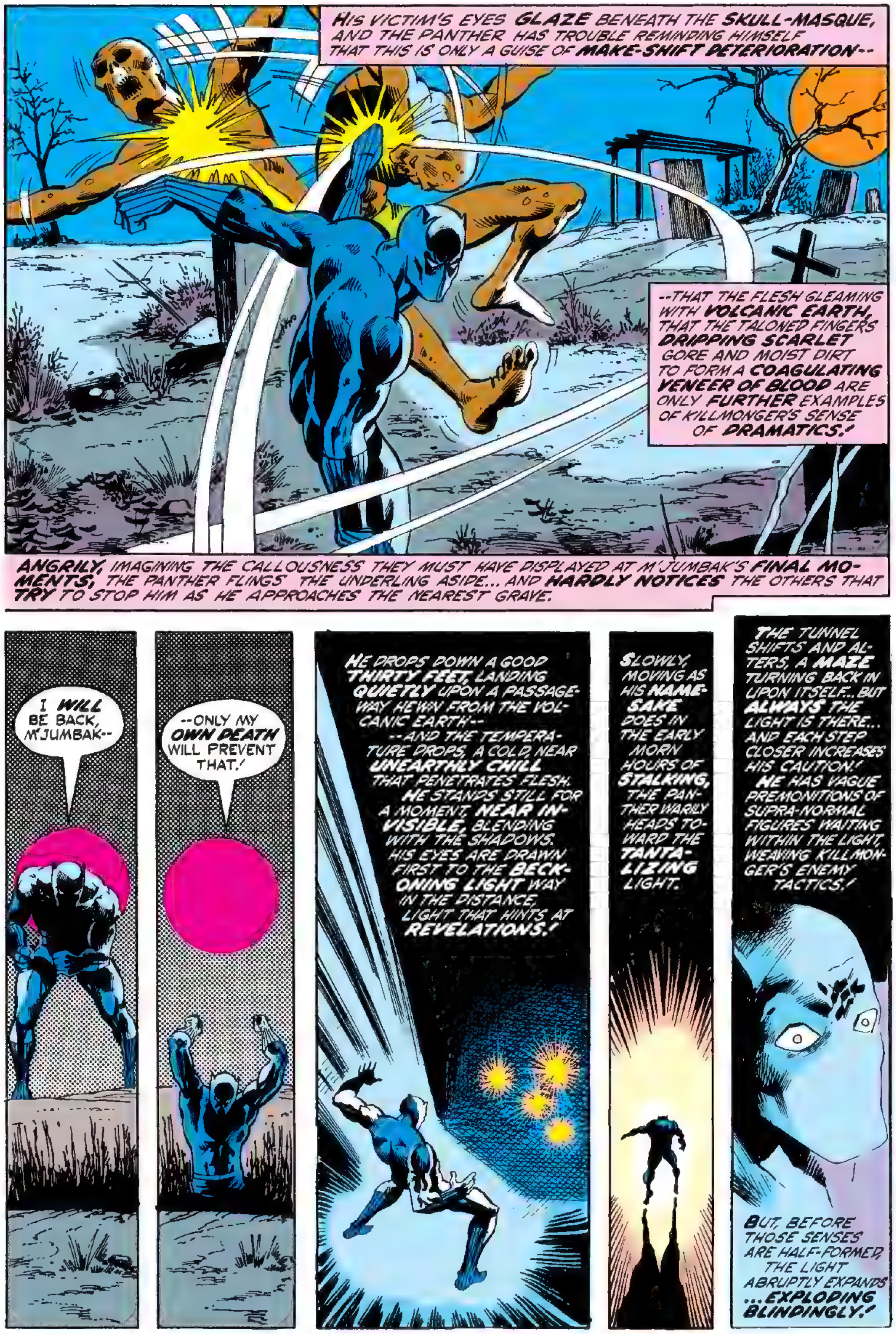

I SAW YOU LEAVE THE PALACE EARLIER. YOU WERE FARTHER DOWN-STREAM THAN I THOUGHT YOU'D BE.
I SUPPOSE W'KABI WOULD TELL YOU THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED UP-RIVER. THE CROCODILES ARE SELDOM SIGHTED NEAR THE AMBER PAGODA.
A MAN GOES TO BROOD WHERE IT'S MOST ISOLATED, TAKU. UNLESS HE HAS SOMEONE TO LISTEN TO HIS SILENCES.
THAT'S WHY I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU, T'CHALLA. IT'S ABOUT MISS LYNNE... YOUR GUEST...
I STOPPED BY THE CELL THE INNER COUNCIL HAS LOCKED HER IN SINCE--
--THEY ACCUSED HER OF MURDERING ZATAMA. SHE ASKED TO SEE YOU.
I COULDN'T RELEASE HER.
NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. W'KABI WOULD THINK I SIDED WITH THE "OUT-WORLDER" ONCE AGAIN.
HOW DID I LOSE HIM, TAKU?
HE WAS ONCE MY RIGHT HAND, HEAD OF COURT SECURITY. WAS IT ONLY MY ABSENCE FROM OUR LAND THAT SEPARATED US, TAKU?
PERHAPS YOU LEFT HIM STANDING ON THE SHORELINE, MY CHIEFTAIN.
THE CURRENT CONTINUES TO TRAVEL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO RETURN TO THE SHORELINE IT HAS PASSED.
IT ANGERS HIM THAT I'VE BROUGHT MONICA TO OUR HIDDEN LAND, BUT GUESTS WERE NEVER UNWELCOME BEFORE.
PART OF IT IS KILLMONGER. SURELY YOU KNOW THAT?
KILLMONGER. THE MAGNIFICENT REBEL ... BUT HE HAS NO CONCERN FOR THE FRAILTY OF THE VICTIMS HE MAIMS!
HE WOULD GOVERN THIS LAND, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'D CALL IT... BUT HE WOULD ONLY BE CONCERNED WITH HIS OWN DESIGNS.
THE QUESTION YOU MUST ASK YOURSELF, MY CHIEFTAIN, IS IF YOU--
--HAVE BEEN ANY DIFFERENT.

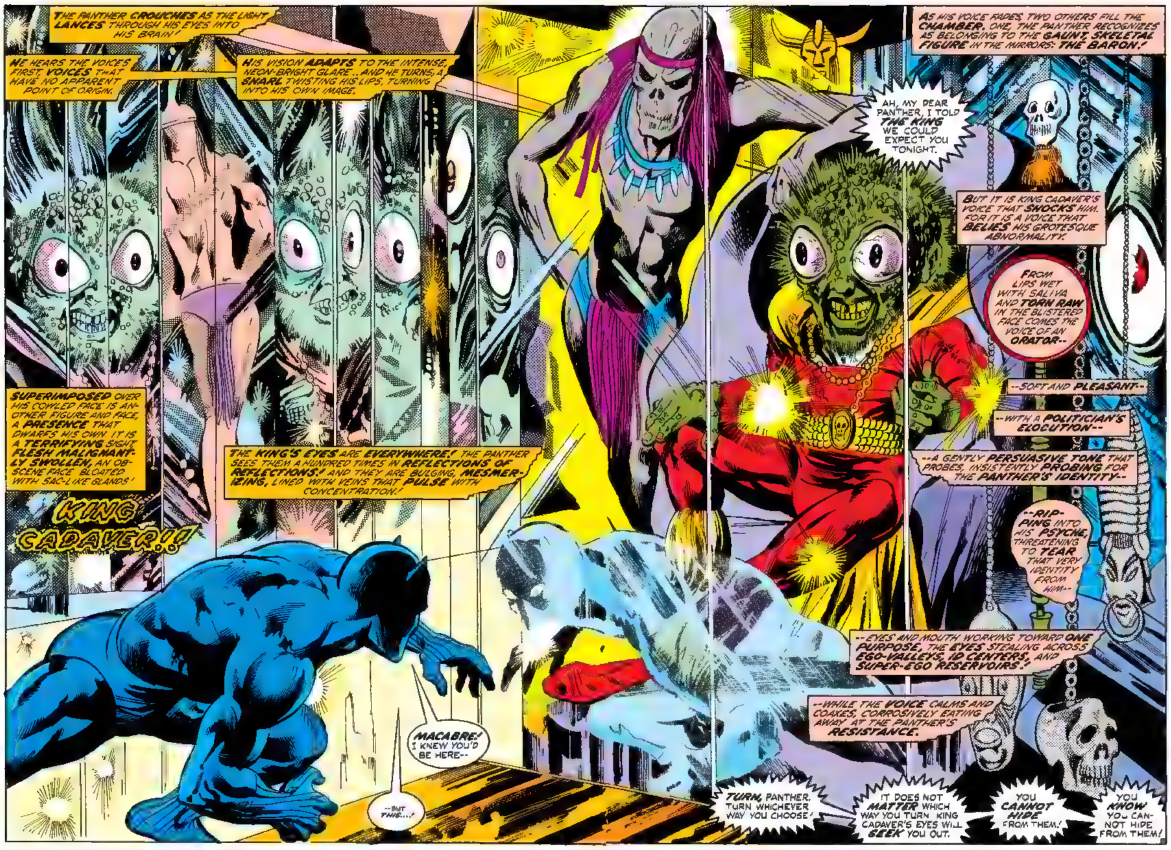

IT IS AN OPULENT CAGE, BUT STILL A CAGE, THINKS T'CHALLA. THE COLUMNS AND INLAID TILES, THE TAPESTRIES AND BOTANICAL GARDENS ARE ALL DIMINISHED BY THE BARRED WINDOWS AND DOORS.
I JUST KEEP LOOKING AT THIS WEAPON THAT HAS YOUR PRINTS ON IT, MONICA. THEY ARE YOUR PRINTS AND THIS IS THE SPEAR THEY FOUND IN ZATAMA'S BODY.
I KEEP LOOKING AT IT TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW THE REAL MURDERER MANAGED THAT LITTLE TRICK.
THERE'S SOMETHING FAMILIAR AND NAGGING ABOUT THIS SPEAR BUT I CAN'T PLACE WHAT.
CAN'T PLACE THIS GREASY SUBSTANCE SMEARED ON IT, EITHER.
T'CHALLA... I'VE SEEN A DOZEN FLICKS WHERE THE LOCAL YOKELS GO OUT FOR THE BLOOD OF THE STRANGE DUDE IN TOWN... NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE PLAYING THAT ROLE.
I'M FRIGHTENED.
ONCE WAKANDA DID NOT MIMIC LIFE, ONCE THEY LIVED IT.
IN THAT TIME, I DO NOT THINK THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED.
I KNOW THIS LAND IS IN YOUR BLOOD, T'CHALLA.
BLOOD VESSELS ARE LIKE A RIVER, MONICA. BOTH KEEP ALIVE THAT THROUGH WHICH THEY FLOW.
OH, HEY, THAT'S HIP, T'CHALLA. YOU AN' THAT KUNG FU GUY OUGHTTA GET TOGETHER AND EXCHANGE PROVERBS!
I'M SORRY, MONICA.
I KNOW YOUR FEAR.
I'M SORRY, TOO. I REALLY WANTED TO SAY...
I NEED YOU.

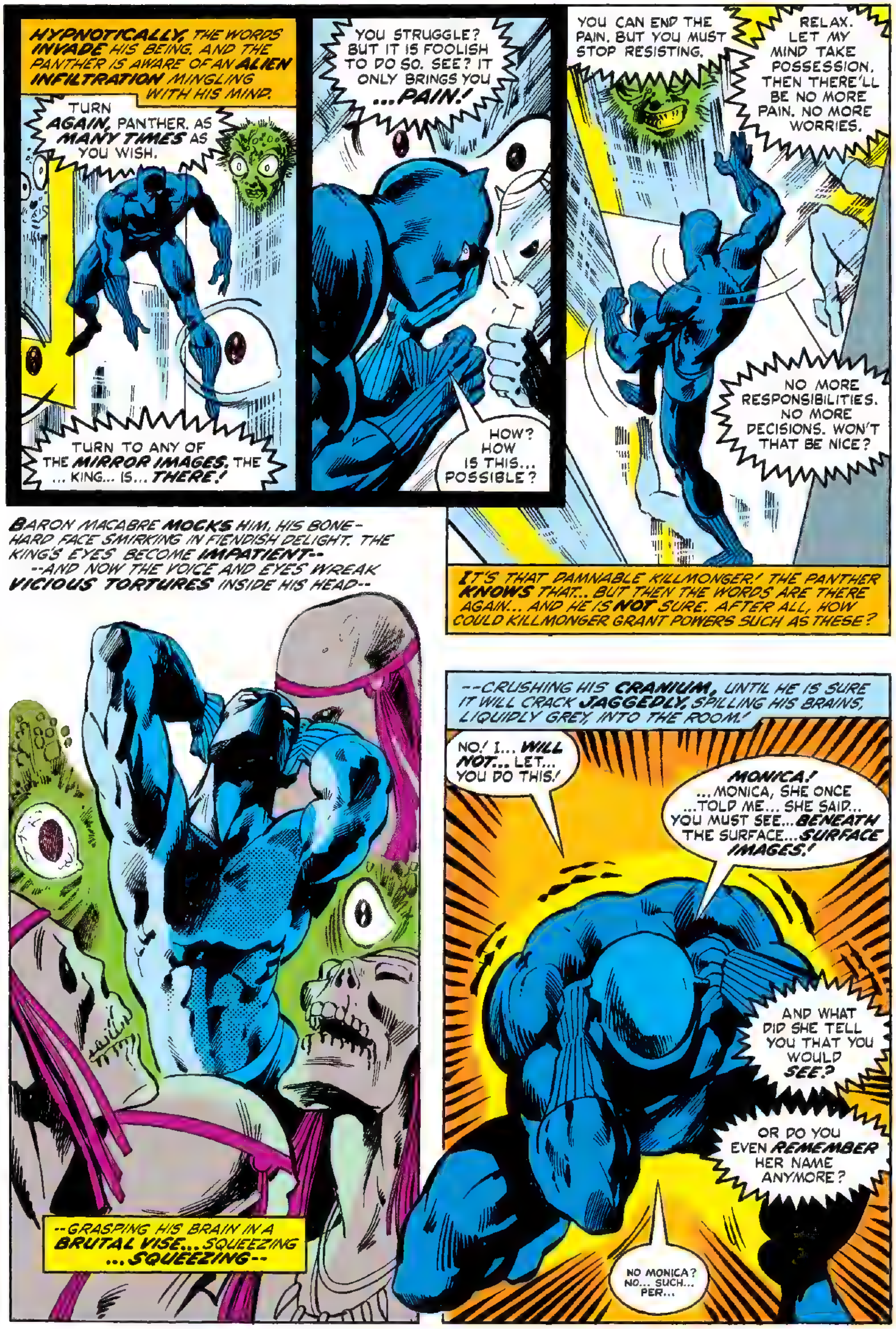

THE LONG NIGHT HAS JUST BEGUN. T'CHALLA WATCHES TANZIKA QUIETLY APPROACH THE THRONE. HER DARK EYES ARE WITHOUT DEPTH. THE FLAMES OF THE SHISH KEBAB DINNER BLAZE THERE SULLENLY.
T'CHALLA STARES PAST TANZIKA, REMEMBERING THE LONG, DARK HOURS OF VIOLENCE FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE, DEADLY HOURS WITH MIDNIGHT SKIES THAT THREATENED THE DAWN LIGHT.
W'KABI, I TOLD YOU. LAST NIGHT, M'JUMBAK'S WIFE CAME TO ME, TELLING ME HER HUSBAND WAS MISSING.
I FOUND M'JUMBAK LAST NIGHT, W'KABI... I FOUND HIM DEAD--!
--LYING ON THE DAMP EARTH OF A SMALL CEMETERY... SLAIN BY SKELETAL FIGURES THAT ROSE FROM THAT DAMP EARTH.
LAST NIGHT, ZATAMA HAD STILL BEEN ALIVE! LAST NIGHT, SOMEONE HAD THRUST A SPEAR INTO HIS CHEST AND THE DAWN LIGHT HAD SHOWN WARMLY ON HIS CORPSE!
THEY WERE LED BY BARON MACABRE!
BUT THEN, LAST NIGHT HAD BEEN A NIGHT OF DEATH, AND NOT ALL THE CORPSES HAD BEEN AS STILL AS ZATAMA'S.
YOU EAT ALONE TONIGHT, MY CHIEFTAIN.
I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR WOMAN ...AND OF HER TERRIBLE DEED!
HUSH, TANZIKA.
IT WOULD SEEM THE KITCHEN IS OVER-STOCKED WITH ROAST KRAAL VENISON. DON'T THEY CHANGE THE MENUS, ANYMORE?
T'CHALLA!
YOU CANNOT TURN YOUR BACK ON MY QUESTIONS ANY LONGER! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE OUT-WORLDER?
SHE HAS BEEN FRAMED, W'KABI. I AM SURE OF THAT. I'M JUST NOT SURE WHO FRAMED HER!
WAS IT YOU W'KABI? YOU HATED ZATAMA ALMOST AS MUCH AS YOU DO MONICA!
I HAVE TRIED TO UNDERSTAND YOU, T'CHALLA. I HAVE STILL CALLED YOU MY CHIEF--
W'KABI'S ANGER SURPRISINGLY CEASES. T'CHALLA TURNS AND SEES KAROTA, M'JUMBAK'S WIFE, STANDING AS IF LOST IN THE MODERN TECHNOLOGY OF THE THRONE ROOM, AS IF SHE WISHES SHE WERE BACK IN THE FIELDS WITH M'JUMBAK AT HER SIDE--
--BUT BEFORE T'CHALLA SPEAKS... SHE KNOWS M'JUMBAK WILL NEVER RETURN!

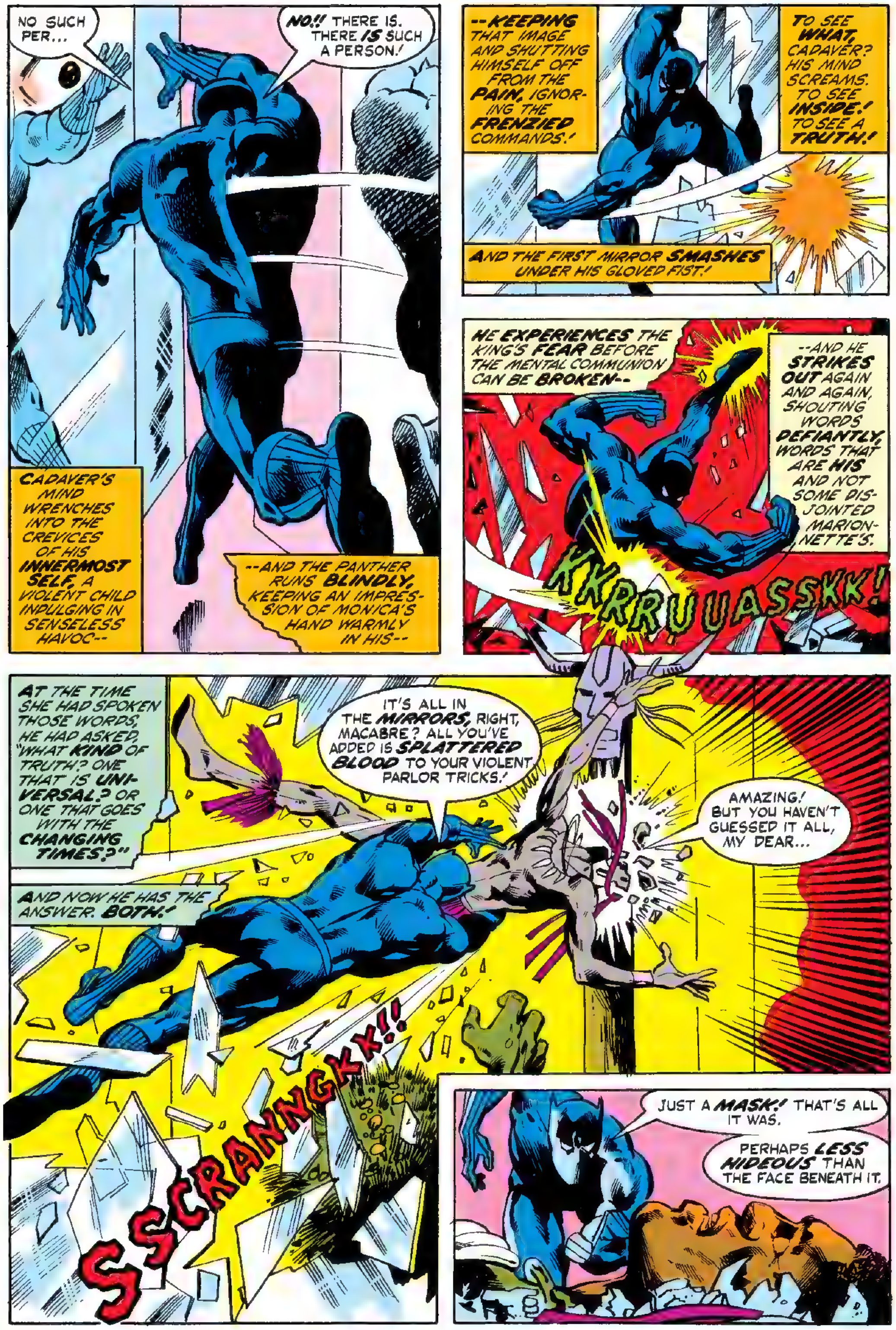

T'CHALLA HOLDS KAROTA FOR A LONG MOMENT, MURMURING VEHEMENTLY, "I WILL AVENGE M'JUMBAK'S DEATH!" BUT THEY ARE WORDS THAT MEAN NOTHING TO HER.
AND THEN HE KNOWS HE CAN AVOID THE TASK NO LONGER! HE RETURNS TO THE SMALL CEMETERY BORDERING M'JUMBAK'S FARMLAND... AND DROPS INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE DEATH SITE.
M'JUMBAK'S BODY IS BRITTLE, CURIOUSLY REMINDING HIM OF THE LEECHES INSIDE THE CROCODILE'S MOUTH, THEIR JUICES SUCKED DRY INTO HOLLOW SHELLS.
I AM SORRY I COULD NOT RETURN FOR YOU SOONER, M'JUMBAK.
TONIGHT ...TONIGHT, I WILL TAKE YOU BACK HOME... AND AWAY FROM THIS HELLISH PLACE!
HE HEARS THE FIRST FAINT CLAWINGS THEN--
--AND TURNS, SEEKING THEIR SOURCE, PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THE GRUESOME SPECTACLE!
HE IS IN THE MIDST OF THE NIGHTMARE ONCE MORE! AS THEY DID THE NIGHT BEFORE, CORPSE-LIKE LIMBS THRUST FROM THE FRESHLY FILLED GRAVES--
--TALONED FINGERS STREAKED WITH BLOOD THAT MARK THEIR EFFORTS TO FREE THEMSELVES FROM THEIR TOMBS!
IT BEGINS ANEW, M'JUMBAK--!

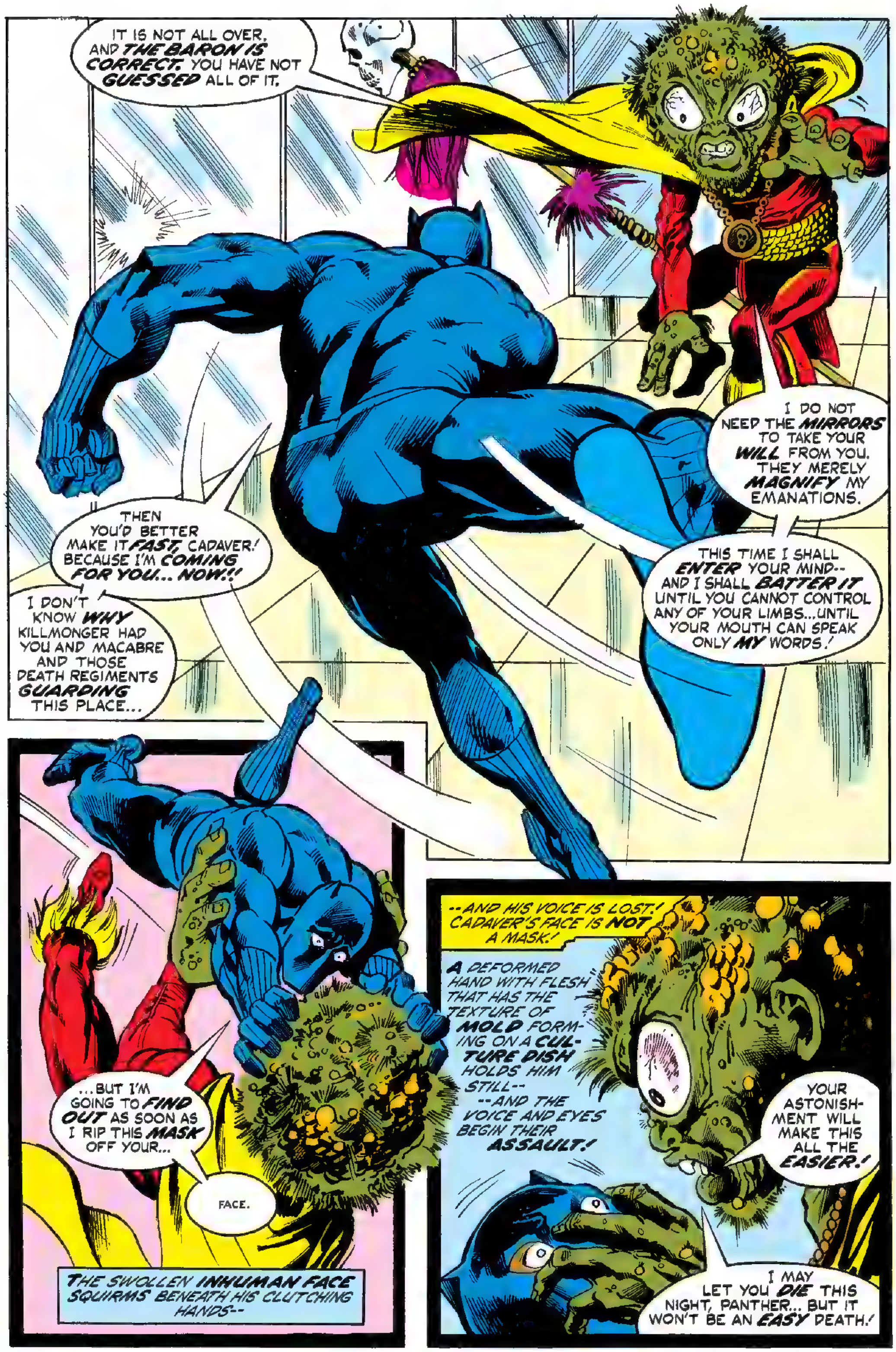

BUT THIS TIME, I SHALL NOT BE DRIVEN AWAY--!
NOT BY THESE "CORPSES"--!
--NOR THEIR LEADER, BARON MACABRE--!
NOTHING SHALL STOP ME--UNTIL I REACH THE UNSEEN FIGURE OF "DEATH INCARNATE"... KING CADAVER!
IT WAS AN UNWISE DECISION TO RETURN. ONE DOES NOT--
SSSURRRVIIIIIVE!
AH, THE "DEAD" HAVE VOICES OF THEIR OWN!
THEN, WE SHALL SPEAK AT LENGTH.
AND YOUR SURVIVAL AS WELL MAY DEPEND ON THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE!
HOW LONG DO YOU SUPPOSE A "CORPSE" CAN GO WITHOUT BREATHING?... SUPPOSE WE TRY AND FIND OUT, HUH?
NOW I'VE GOT A QUESTION: MACABRE! I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE BARON IS!
AND I'M REALLY HOPING YOU DON'T ANSWER TOO QUICKLY!
GGHHUUHH!
GETTING DIFFICULT TO BREATHE, IS IT?
PERHAPS YOU WERE ONLY ONE OF THE ONES WHO WATCHED M'JUMBAK DIE! I'LL BET HIS DEATH MEANT NOTHING TO YOU, DID IT?
UUAARRKK!
BUT IT MEANS SOMETHING NOW. IT MEANS YOU ARE VERY CLOSE TO BECOMING A REAL CORPSE--
--AND THOSE PHONY TALONED FINGERTIPS WON'T DIG YOU OUT OF ANY MORE SHROUDS!
BELOW! ANY... URK ...ANY OF THE GRAVES!
TO WHERE?
THEY... THEY LEAD TO ...TO THE DARK REALM!
TO ...KING CADAVER!


HIS VICTIM'S EYES GLAZE BENEATH THE SKULL-MASQUE, AND THE PANTHER HAS TROUBLE REMINDING HIMSELF THAT THIS IS ONLY A GUISE OF MAKE-SHIFT DETERIORATION--
--THAT THE FLESH GLEAMING WITH VOLCANIC EARTH, THAT THE TALONED FINGERS DRIPPING SCARLET GORE AND MOIST DIRT TO FORM A COAGULATING VENEER OF BLOOD ARE ONLY FURTHER EXAMPLES OF KILLMONGER'S SENSE OF DRAMATICS!
ANGRILY, IMAGINING THE CALLOUSNESS THEY MUST HAVE DISPLAYED AT M'JUMBAK'S FINAL MOMENTS, THE PANTHER FLINGS THE UNDERLING ASIDE... AND HARDLY NOTICES THE OTHERS THAT TRY TO STOP HIM AS HE APPROACHES THE NEAREST GRAVE.
I WILL BE BACK, M'JUMBAK--
--ONLY MY OWN DEATH WILL PREVENT THAT!
HE DROPS DOWN A GOOD THIRTY FEET, LANDING QUIETLY UPON A PASSAGEWAY HEWN FROM THE VOLCANIC EARTH--
--AND THE TEMPERATURE DROPS, A COLD, NEAR UNEARTHLY CHILL THAT PENETRATES FLESH.
HE STANDS STILL FOR A MOMENT, NEAR INVISIBLE, BLENDING WITH THE SHADOWS. HIS EYES ARE DRAWN FIRST TO THE BECKONING LIGHT WAY IN THE DISTANCE, LIGHT THAT HINTS AT REVELATIONS!
SLOWLY, MOVING AS HIS NAMESAKE DOES IN THE EARLY MORN HOURS OF STALKING, THE PANTHER WARILY HEADS TOWARD THE TANTALIZING LIGHT.
THE TUNNEL SHIFTS AND ALTERS, A MAZE TURNING BACK IN UPON ITSELF... BUT ALWAYS THE LIGHT IS THERE... AND EACH STEP CLOSER INCREASES HIS CAUTION!
HE HAS VAGUE PREMONITIONS OF SUPRA-NORMAL FIGURES WAITING WITHIN THE LIGHT, WEAVING KILLMONGER'S ENEMY TACTICS!
BUT, BEFORE THOSE SENSES ARE HALF-FORMED, THE LIGHT ABRUPTLY EXPANDS ...EXPLODING BLINDINGLY!

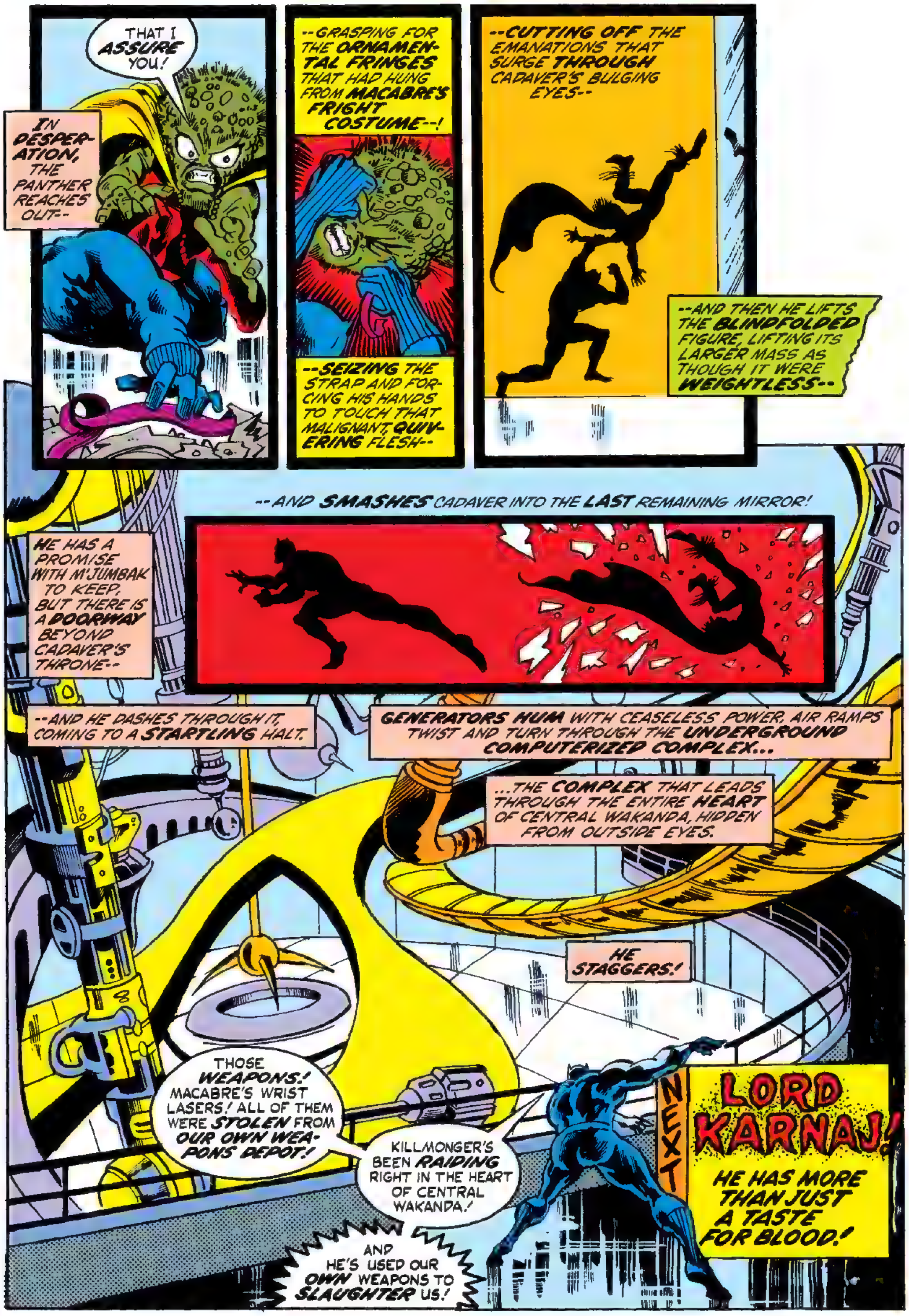

THE PANTHER CROUCHES AS THE LIGHT LANCES THROUGH HIS EYES INTO HIS BRAIN!
HE HEARS THE VOICES FIRST, VOICES THAT HAVE NO APPARENT POINT OF ORIGIN.
HIS VISION ADAPTS TO THE INTENSE, NEON-BRIGHT GLARE .. AND HE TURNS, A SNARL TWISTING HIS LIPS, TURNING INTO HIS OWN IMAGE.
SUPERIMPOSED OVER HIS COWLED FACE IS ANOTHER FIGURE AND FACE, A PRESENCE THAT DWARFS HIS OWN. IT IS A TERRIFYING SIGHT, FLESH MALIGNANTLY SWOLLEN, AN OBSCENE FACE BLOATED WITH SAC-LIKE GLANDS!
KING CADAVER!!
THE KING'S EYES ARE EVERYWHERE! THE PANTHER SEES THEM A HUNDRED TIMES IN REFLECTIONS OF REFLECTIONS! AND THEY ARE BULGING, MESMERIZING, LINED WITH VEINS THAT PULSE WITH CONCENTRATION!
MACABRE! I KNEW YOU'D BE HERE--
--BUT THIS...!
AS HIS VOICE FADES, TWO OTHERS FILL THE CHAMBER. ONE, THE PANTHER RECOGNIZES AS BELONGING TO THE GAUNT, SKELETAL FIGURE IN THE MIRRORS: THE BARON!
AH, MY DEAR PANTHER, I TOLD THE KING WE COULD EXPECT YOU TONIGHT.
BUT IT IS KING CADAVER'S VOICE THAT SHOCKS HIM. FOR IT IS A VOICE THAT BELIES HIS GROTESQUE ABNORMALITY.
FROM LIPS WET WITH SALIVA AND TORN RAW IN THE BLISTERED FACE COMES THE VOICE OF AN ORATOR--
--SOFT AND PLEASANT--
--WITH A POLITICIAN'S ELOCUTION--
--A GENTLY PERSUASIVE TONE THAT PROBES, INSISTENTLY PROBING FOR THE PANTHER'S IDENTITY--
--RIPPING INTO HIS PSYCHE, THREATENING TO TEAR THAT VERY IDENTITY FROM HIM--
--EYES AND MOUTH WORKING TOWARD ONE PURPOSE, THE EYES STEALING ACROSS EGO-VALLEYS, ID CENTERS, AND SUPER-EGO RESERVOIRS!
--WHILE THE VOICE CALMS AND COAXES, CORROSIVELY EATING AWAY AT THE PANTHER'S RESISTANCE.
TURN, PANTHER. TURN WHICHEVER WAY YOU CHOOSE!
IT DOES NOT MATTER WHICH WAY YOU TURN. KING CADAVER'S EYES WILL SEEK YOU OUT.
YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM THEM!
YOU KNOW YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM THEM!


HYPNOTICALLY, THE WORDS INVADE HIS BEING, AND THE PANTHER IS AWARE OF AN ALIEN INFILTRATION MINGLING WITH HIS MIND.
TURN AGAIN, PANTHER, AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WISH.
TURN TO ANY OF THE MIRROR IMAGES, THE ... KING... IS... THERE!
YOU STRUGGLE? BUT IT IS FOOLISH TO DO SO. SEE? IT ONLY BRINGS YOU ...PAIN!
HOW? HOW IS THIS... POSSIBLE?
YOU CAN END THE PAIN, BUT YOU MUST STOP RESISTING.
RELAX. LET MY MIND TAKE POSSESSION. THEN THERE'LL BE NO MORE PAIN, NO MORE WORRIES.
NO MORE RESPONSIBILITIES. NO MORE DECISIONS. WON'T THAT BE NICE?
IT'S THAT DAMNABLE KILLMONGER! THE PANTHER KNOWS THAT... BUT THEN THE WORDS ARE THERE AGAIN... AND HE IS NOT SURE. AFTER ALL, HOW COULD KILLMONGER GRANT POWERS SUCH AS THESE?
BARON MACABRE MOCKS HIM, HIS BONE-HARD FACE SMIRKING IN FIENDISH DELIGHT. THE KING'S EYES BECOME IMPATIENT--
--AND NOW THE VOICE AND EYES WREAK VICIOUS TORTURES INSIDE HIS HEAD--
--GRASPING HIS BRAIN IN A BRUTAL VISE... SQUEEZING ...SQUEEZING--
--CRUSHING HIS CRANIUM, UNTIL HE IS SURE IT WILL CRACK JAGGEDLY, SPILLING HIS BRAINS, LIQUIDLY GREY, INTO THE ROOM!
NO! I... WILL NOT... LET... YOU DO THIS!
MONICA! ...MONICA, SHE ONCE ...TOLD ME... SHE SAID... YOU MUST SEE... BENEATH THE SURFACE... SURFACE IMAGES!
AND WHAT DID SHE TELL YOU THAT YOU WOULD SEE?
OR DO YOU EVEN REMEMBER HER NAME ANYMORE?
NO MONICA? NO... SUCH... PER...

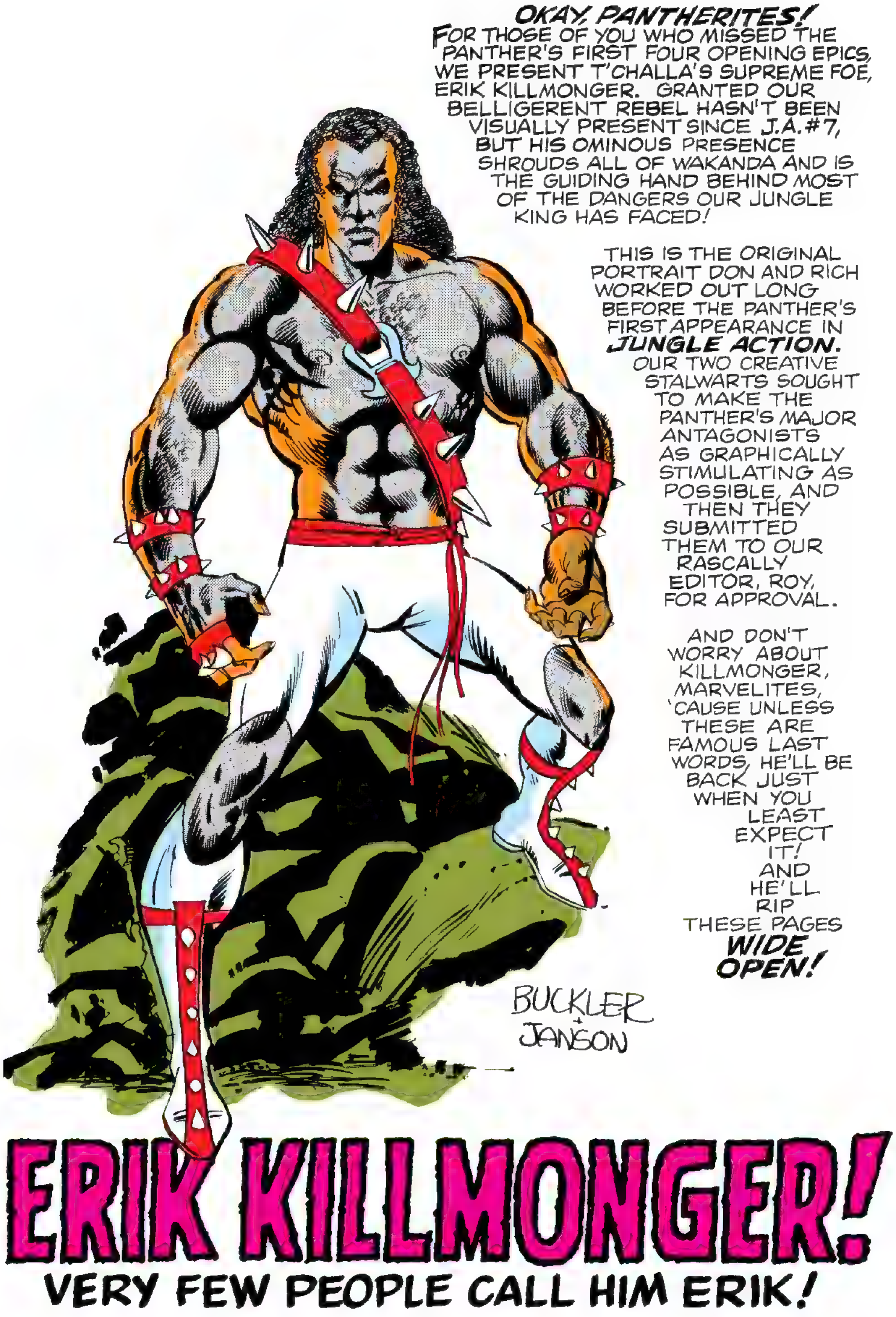

NO SUCH PER...
NO!! THERE IS. THERE IS SUCH A PERSON!
CADAVER'S MIND WRENCHES INTO THE CREVICES OF HIS INNERMOST SELF, A VIOLENT CHILD INDULGING IN SENSELESS HAVOC--
--AND THE PANTHER RUNS BLINDLY, KEEPING AN IMPRESSION OF MONICA'S HAND WARMLY IN HIS--
--KEEPING THAT IMAGE AND SHUTTING HIMSELF OFF FROM THE PAIN, IGNORING THE FRENZIED COMMANDS!
TO SEE WHAT, CADAVER? HIS MIND SCREAMS. TO SEE INSIDE! TO SEE A TRUTH!
AND THE FIRST MIRROR SMASHES UNDER HIS GLOVED FIST!
HE EXPERIENCES THE KING'S FEAR BEFORE THE MENTAL COMMUNION CAN BE BROKEN--
--AND HE STRIKES OUT AGAIN AND AGAIN, SHOUTING WORDS DEFIANTLY, WORDS THAT ARE HIS AND NOT SOME DISJOINTED MARIONNETTE'S.
KKRRRUUASSKK!
AT THE TIME SHE HAD SPOKEN THOSE WORDS, HE HAD ASKED, "WHAT KIND OF TRUTH? ONE THAT IS UNIVERSAL? OR ONE THAT GOES WITH THE CHANGING TIMES?"
AND NOW HE HAS THE ANSWER. BOTH!
IT'S ALL IN THE MIRRORS, RIGHT, MACABRE? ALL YOU'VE ADDED IS SPLATTERED BLOOD TO YOUR VIOLENT PARLOR TRICKS!
AMAZING! BUT YOU HAVEN'T GUESSED IT ALL, MY DEAR...
SSCRANNGKK!!
JUST A MASK! THAT'S ALL IT WAS.
PERHAPS LESS HIDEOUS THAN THE FACE BENEATH IT.



IT IS NOT ALL OVER. AND THE BARON IS CORRECT. YOU HAVE NOT GUESSED ALL OF IT.
I DO NOT NEED THE MIRRORS TO TAKE YOUR WILL FROM YOU. THEY MERELY MAGNIFY MY EMANATIONS.
THIS TIME I SHALL ENTER YOUR MIND--AND I SHALL BATTER IT UNTIL YOU CANNOT CONTROL ANY OF YOUR LIMBS...UNTIL YOUR MOUTH CAN SPEAK ONLY MY WORDS!
THEN YOU'D BETTER MAKE IT FAST, CADAVER! BECAUSE I'M COMING FOR YOU... NOW!!
I DON'T KNOW WHY KILLMONGER HAD YOU AND MACABRE AND THOSE DEATH REGIMENTS GUARDING THIS PLACE...
...BUT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT AS SOON AS I RIP THIS MASK OFF YOUR...
FACE.
THE SWOLLEN INHUMAN FACE SQUIRMS BENEATH HIS CLUTCHING HANDS--
--AND HIS VOICE IS LOST! CADAVER'S FACE IS NOT A MASK!
A DEFORMED HAND WITH FLESH THAT HAS THE TEXTURE OF MOLD FORMING ON A CULTURE DISH HOLDS HIM STILL-- --AND THE VOICE AND EYES BEGIN THEIR ASSAULT!
YOUR ASTONISHMENT WILL MAKE THIS ALL THE EASIER!
I MAY LET YOU DIE THIS NIGHT, PANTHER... BUT IT WON'T BE AN EASY DEATH!


IN DESPERATION, THE PANTHER REACHES OUT--
THAT I ASSURE YOU!
--GRASPING FOR THE ORNAMENTAL FRINGES THAT HAD HUNG FROM MACABRE'S FRIGHT COSTUME--!
--SEIZING THE STRAP AND FORCING HIS HANDS TO TOUCH THAT MALIGNANT, QUIVERING FLESH--
--CUTTING OFF THE EMANATIONS THAT SURGE THROUGH CADAVER'S BULGING EYES--
--AND THEN HE LIFTS THE BLINDFOLDED FIGURE, LIFTING ITS LARGER MASS AS THOUGH IT WERE WEIGHTLESS--
--AND SMASHES CADAVER INTO THE LAST REMAINING MIRROR!
HE HAS A PROMISE WITH M'JUMBAK TO KEEP, BUT THERE IS A DOORWAY BEYOND CADAVER'S THRONE--
--AND HE DASHES THROUGH IT, COMING TO A STARTLING HALT.
GENERATORS HUM WITH CEASELESS POWER, AIR RAMPS TWIST AND TURN THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND COMPUTERIZED COMPLEX...
...THE COMPLEX THAT LEADS THROUGH THE ENTIRE HEART OF CENTRAL WAKANDA, HIDDEN FROM OUTSIDE EYES.
HE STAGGERS!
THOSE WEAPONS! MACABRE'S WRIST LASERS! ALL OF THEM WERE STOLEN FROM OUR OWN WEAPONS DEPOT!
KILLMONGER'S BEEN RAIDING RIGHT IN THE HEART OF CENTRAL WAKANDA!
AND HE'S USED OUR OWN WEAPONS TO SLAUGHTER US!
NEXT
LORD KARNAJ!
HE HAS MORE THAN JUST A TASTE FOR BLOOD!

HERE IT IS, PEOPLE! JACK KIRBY'S ORIGINAL COSTUME FOR THE BLACK PANTHER! ONLY WOULDJA BELIEVE THAT BACK IN THOSE HALCYON DAYS STAN AND JACK WERE CALLING HIM THE COAL TIGER!
BLACK PANTHER
Artistry
YOU'VE NO DOUBT NOTICED A FEW SLIGHT CHANGES IN T'CHALLA'S ATTIRE AND NAME WHICH GIVES YOU JUST A VAGUE IDEA WHAT KIND OF VISUAL PREPARATIONS AND CHARACTER ATTITUDES ARE CONSIDERED BEFORE ONE OF OUR SCINTILLATING HEROES BURST FULL BLOWN INTO COMIC BOOK REALITY.
SO HERE IT IS, MARVEL-ITES! FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS RARE COLLECTOR'S ITEM PRESENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!
KINDA GETS TO YOU, DOESN'T IT?


OKAY, PANTHERITES!
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MISSED THE PANTHER'S FIRST FOUR OPENING EPICS, WE PRESENT T'CHALLA'S SUPREME FOE, ERIK KILLMONGER. GRANTED OUR BELLIGERENT REBEL HASN'T BEEN VISUALLY PRESENT SINCE J.A. #7, BUT HIS OMINOUS PRESENCE SHROUDS ALL OF WAKANDA AND IS THE GUIDING HAND BEHIND MOST OF THE DANGERS OUR JUNGLE KING HAS FACED!
THIS IS THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT DON AND RICH WORKED OUT LONG BEFORE THE PANTHER'S FIRST APPEARANCE IN JUNGLE ACTION. OUR TWO CREATIVE STALWARTS SOUGHT TO MAKE THE PANTHER'S MAJOR ANTAGONISTS AS GRAPHICALLY STIMULATING AS POSSIBLE, AND THEN THEY SUBMITTED THEM TO OUR RASCALLY EDITOR, ROY, FOR APPROVAL.
AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT KILLMONGER, MARVELITES, 'CAUSE UNLESS THESE ARE FAMOUS LAST WORDS, HE'LL BE BACK JUST WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT! AND HE'LL RIP THESE PAGES WIDE OPEN!
BUCKLER + JANSON
ERIK KILLMONGER!
VERY FEW PEOPLE CALL HIM ERIK!

NEXT ISSUE IN JUNGLE ACTION
ONCE YOU SLAY THE DRAGON!
You've seen the Panther battling the minions of Kill-monger through-out the exotic locales of Wakanda, but next issue he hits Killmonger right where he lives, Pantherites, carrying the battle to Killmonger's home turf where he meets...LORD KARNAJ!
And as if that isn't enough, MALICE, KING CADAVER, TAYETE & KAZIBE return in an all out combat ish that's unlike anything your awe-struck eyes have ever witnessed. But do we stop there? Of course not.
For all you eye-glass super sleuths will finally learn the identity of ZATAMA'S MURDERER! And exactly how Monica Lynne's prints got on that murder weapon, as we play "Banacek" for a special two-page back up feature, that shows you where you blew it or where you matched wits and out-guessed our nefarious creators.
JUNGLE ACTION #12: FACE IT! THIS ONE YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WAKANDA CON SOCIETY: Here it is two months after the on sale date of JUNGLE ACTION #9 (hopefully it's only two months) and we're going to try to explain why there was a three to four-month-wait between issues 8 and 9. The paper shortage caught up with us, Gang! Here was our production chief, John Verpoorten, screaming that the issue was late. There was all this Gil Kane and Klaus Janson artwork numbered and ready to go. There was that beautiful coloring by Glynis Wein already sent to Chemical.

And then there was this wait.

Now we're not the impatient types, but when the color make-ready (that's a coverless advance copy of the comic that comes into the office to let us know what bonehead mistakes we made before the books come out on the stands) never showed up after four weeks...we kinda suspected something was wrong.

Something was. Wouldn't you know it?

JUNGLE ACTION was last on the schedule, three books had to be held back and guess which book was one of the three. So now we had that incredible gap between issues. Can continuity survive a three to four month lap? Fortunately we had that comprehensive review in the back of issue #9 to refresh people's memories...and we hope some of you cared enough to look back at your past issues.

So here's the fifth saga in the Panther's Rage series, continuing as strong as ever. When we originally worked on this issue we weren't even aware there would be a price change in effect. The times they are a'changing.

What this all comes down too, is that we hope you're still with us...that you've become involved with the Wakandan culture and its people...that the Panther, Monica, W'Kabi, Taku and the others have become characters that you care about, that become flesh and blood entities that transcend the four color pages, that can even sustain interest after a three or four month absence.

Let us know, hear! We're back at the old homestead, waiting for your replies, your critiques, analyses, and any other type of reaction you care to write.

The PANTHER is back! And you know what? We'd like to keep it that way. We hope you do too!

Now if only Don would come down from the roof everything would be fine.

Dear Roy,

JUNGLE ACTION is great now that you have the right character in it—THE BLACK PANTHER! Plus!! For once your whole Bullpen was great!

Issue #6, "Panther's Rage" was great! Issue #7, "Death Regiments Beneath Wakanda" was rated "B". But issue #8, "Malice By Crimson Moonlight" was super-great. "A+" I dug it! No Prize time! On the cover of issue #8 there's a woman with a green outfit! She wasn't in the mag. Who is she?

Robert Nichols
417½ Chestnut Street
Erie, Penn. 16507

Uuhhh...the Jolly Green Giant's mate?

No?

How about it being Malice's split personality?

Don't buy that either, huh?

Hokay...the real story is that Don saw the cover being colored before it was finished, and when the printed version reached his eyes, he too was amazed by Malice's chameleon number. And he asked as you did. "Who is she?"

She was Malice, but the cover colorist had thought the two pictures of our villainous beauty were really two separate people. And there you have another incident revealed from the wild, unpredictable world of comics. Why it's almost wild and unpredictable enough to give ulcers to a cast-iron stomach.

Dear Roy and Don,

So the BLACK PANTHER has his own mag. It's about time. After all those great white fathers (and mothers) we've had tromping across Africa, a real bona-fide Black African jungle king was desperately needed.

Only there's one thing wrong.

So far as you've depicted it, the Panther is a dirty, ruthless exploiter of his people. How else do you explain the incongruity between that nifty multi-million dollar palace of his and the grass huts his subjects live in?

Such a squandering of the tribal fortune is unthinkable by one so supposedly noble as the Panther has been made out to be. So let's see him spending some of those billions on schools, running water, electricity and generally improving his people's condition, huh?

Remember, this is supposed to be a super-scientific jungle kingdom, not the Waziri or any other jungle king's pet African tribe for that matter.

Bob Hughes
103 Cottage St.
New Haven, Ct. 06511

Right on, Bob. No one around here will deny that. Eventually, we will explore much of the contrasts you mention. There have been brief references made of it (see the opening caption on JA #9 concerning the choice each young Wakandan must eventually make), but we have a great deal more to say on the subject in future issues. Don has planned to depict the super culture shock the Wakandans faced initially when the vibranium ore, and the young T'Challa's decisions, changed the very nature of their existence. Don has been waiting for some time to get into that, but in our fifteen-page limit at present he's also had a few other items to concentrate on.

We think you've noticed. If you haven't, go back to the beginning of this issue and we'll start again.

No doubt about it, though, the introduction of sophisticated technology had profound effects upon the Wakandan nation, many of which are manifesting themselves in our current series.

We'll certainly get around to explaining the functions of the Wakandan medical procedures and such. In fact, Don had a bit of that planned for this issue, believe it or not, but he had to cut it at the last moment because it would have amounted to a great deal of overcopy. Some say he's got a bit of that already. But—he's trying.

For instance, on the 7th page of the story, a couple of captions had to be cut that read: "Karota does not protest as he leads her to the MODERN HOSPITAL in the middle of Central Wakanda, and although the electric lights are a phenomenon she has witnessed before, still she expresses a silent distrust—

—until he gently hands her over to the tribal herbalist, MENDINAO, who leads her past HIGHLY TRAINED SPECIALISTS who wield their surgical specialties in the elaborate waiting rooms, decorated in tribal ornaments that mask the technology in that building."

Okay, room dictated that be cut, but in future issues, as mentioned, we will explore many of those areas. Believe us. We've given it a lot of thought.

One thing's for sure. You're right. The Wakanda aren't the Waziris. No put down...just no way.

Hey, Marvelites, we don't want to say THE BLACK PANTHER has become the rage of the world, but he has made appearances in the comic fanzines not only here in America but even as far away as England.

So here, without further ado, is Richard Burton (that's what it says, don't blame us) reviewing our first BLACK PANTHER appearance in JUNGLE ACTION #6.

"At long last the Black Panther kicks off with his own series and a good start it is too with a new and excellent art team. Buckler is rapidly proving himself to be one of the leaders in the "new wave" of artists with his new art. With inker Klaus Janson, his work is even better. Don McGregor too seems to be becoming synonymous with Buckler, and these two could bear some watching in the future. However, as to this series: T'Challa returns to Wakanda to find that yet another big strong meanie is terrorizing the land in his absence. But, as this is an intro into the series, it shouldn't be judged to harshly. Don seems to be steering away from the super-scientific, prosperous Wakanda of Jack Kirby to show the more traditional African settlement, even to including two maps on the letters page; one of Central Wakanda and the other of the whole area of Wakanda. Thereby he has set himself limits to work in (there's even an 'uncharted area' called "Domain of the White Gorillas"!). A series to watch - it could be good."

* * * *

And we hope it turned out that way for you, Richard. This review originally appeared in Comic Media's companion review zine which is edited by Nick Landau. But just in case you think the Panther was shunned here in the U.S., here is Guy Lillian's review of JUNGLE ACTION #8 in the Menomonee Falls Gazette.

"PANTHER is obviously Don's best work; it shows a lot of effort, and his strong, sharp ability is well put to an interesting task. Rich Buckler's artwork is tremendous this time, even though the action segments aren't as powerful as last issue —dig that two-page splash the most! Fine work all around as Killmonger continues his attack on Wakanda, this time through a svelte villainess named Malice, another of KM's crummy crew. Her beauty is welcome, considering Baron Macabre, coming up next issue... Gil Kane takes over from Buckler in that issue, a fine artist indeed, but I hope a temporary replacement.

* * * *

Extremely temporary, Guy. Gil was able to do only one (excellent) issue.

Now Billy Graham is handling the pencils. But Klaus is still along for our ride into oblivion and with his ever increasing virtuosity as an inker, we think we'll retain quite a sense of continuity.

Thanks for the favorable reviews, Fellas! We're glad you like the end results of those months of effort on the BLACK PANTHER strip.

And now let's get back to our regular correspondents.

Dear Roy, Don, Rich and Klaus,

The latest JUNGLE ACTION (#8) shows signs of creativity (well, the first three pages anyway. From there on it looks like them old deadlines blues again.)

Keep up the good work, though. The idea of a combination primitive—scientific society that belongs to no time is fascinating.

My only real complaint is the length of the stories. C'mon! Can't you do something?

Fillers can be a rip-off on the consumer, forcing (sort of) him to buy 4 or 5 pages of reprints to get only 14 pages of the real thing. And besides, features like "Black Panther Artistry" are just gonna get you in trouble...it made me miss Barry Smith!

Rock on!

John Hayman
22 Copley Terr.
Pittsfield, Ma. 01201

Sorry you feel that way about the feature pages, John. We don't happen to think they're a rip-off. Actually, they are supplied compliments of several people (among them Danny Krespi, Jim Salicrup and Ed Hannigan) who have offered their time and efforts to Don so that reprint material can be held to a minimum.

If having the Panther remain at 15 pages means it will survive as a series, we can't be entirely against it. The series means that much to its creators.

Of course they'd all like to see it expand, including Stan and Roy, and hope that it will happen soon.

Meantime, we're issuing these feature pages to give you as visually interesting sidelight concepts as possible, exploring related facets of the series. Hopefully, because it will be impossible to keep these feature pages going forever, sales and reader response will warrant the Panther spreading through the entire book.

As for Rich, though he's sadly had to leave the Panther, he and Don will team again in AMAZING ADVENTURES #25, where Rich lends his dynamic style to Killraven and WAR OF THE WORLDS.

But let us know how you feel about the first appearance of our man, Billy Graham. We'll be waiting on your answer, Marvelites.

Hang in there!

THIS IS IT! YOUR
MARVEL
VALUE
STAMP
FOR THIS ISSUE!
CLIP 'EM AND
COLLECT 'EM!

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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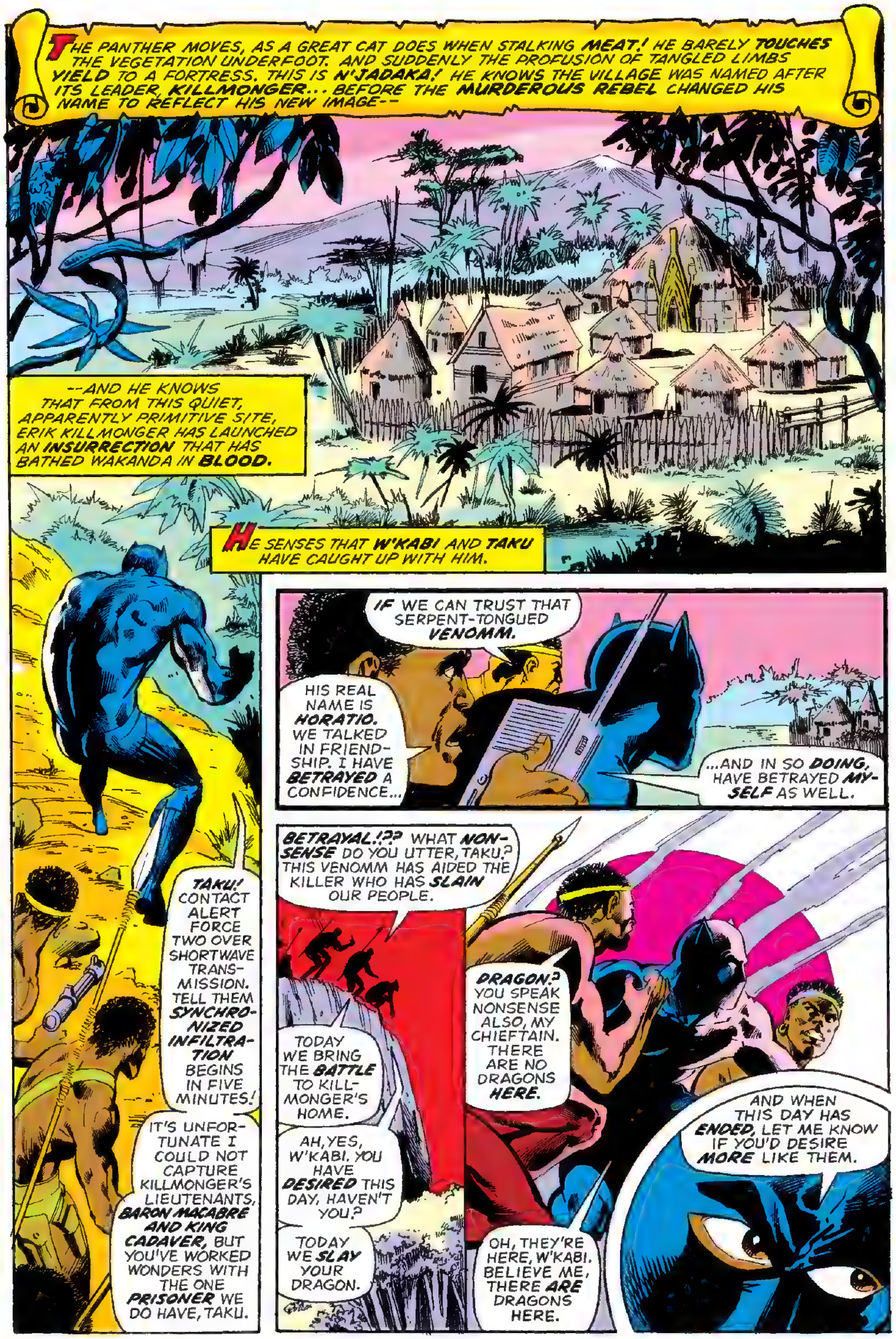
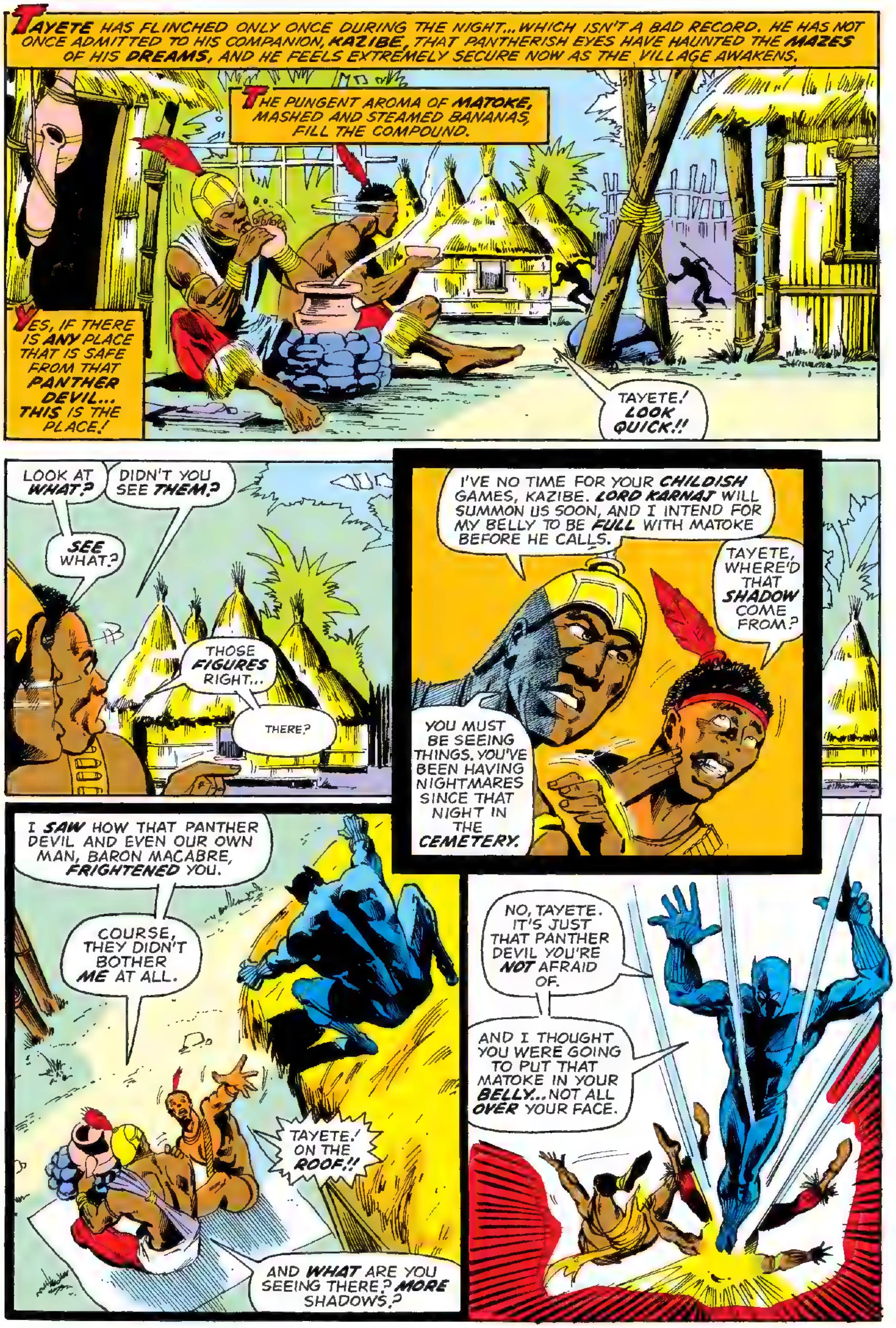
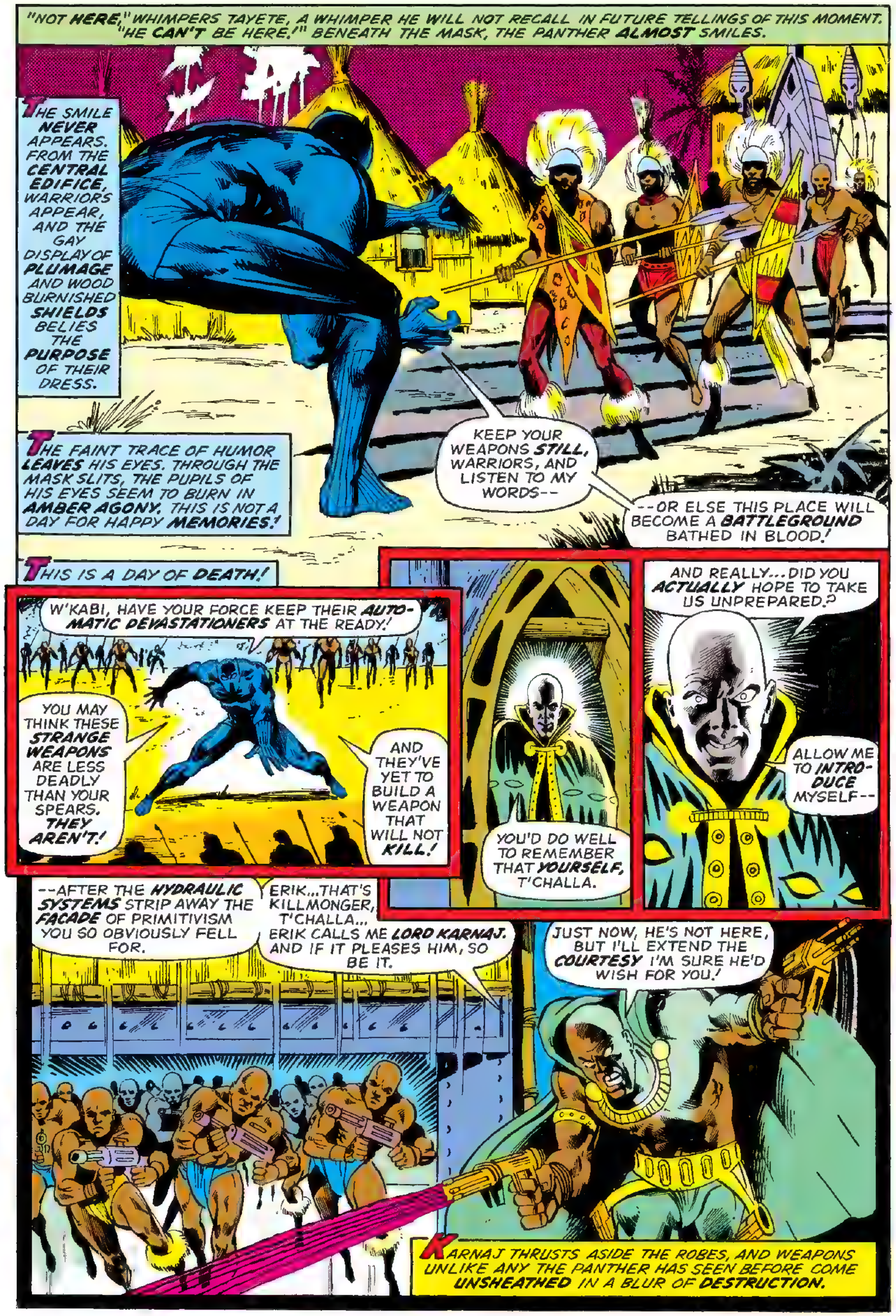
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
BARON MACABRE..
LORD KARNAJ..
--AND DEATH MAKES THREE!

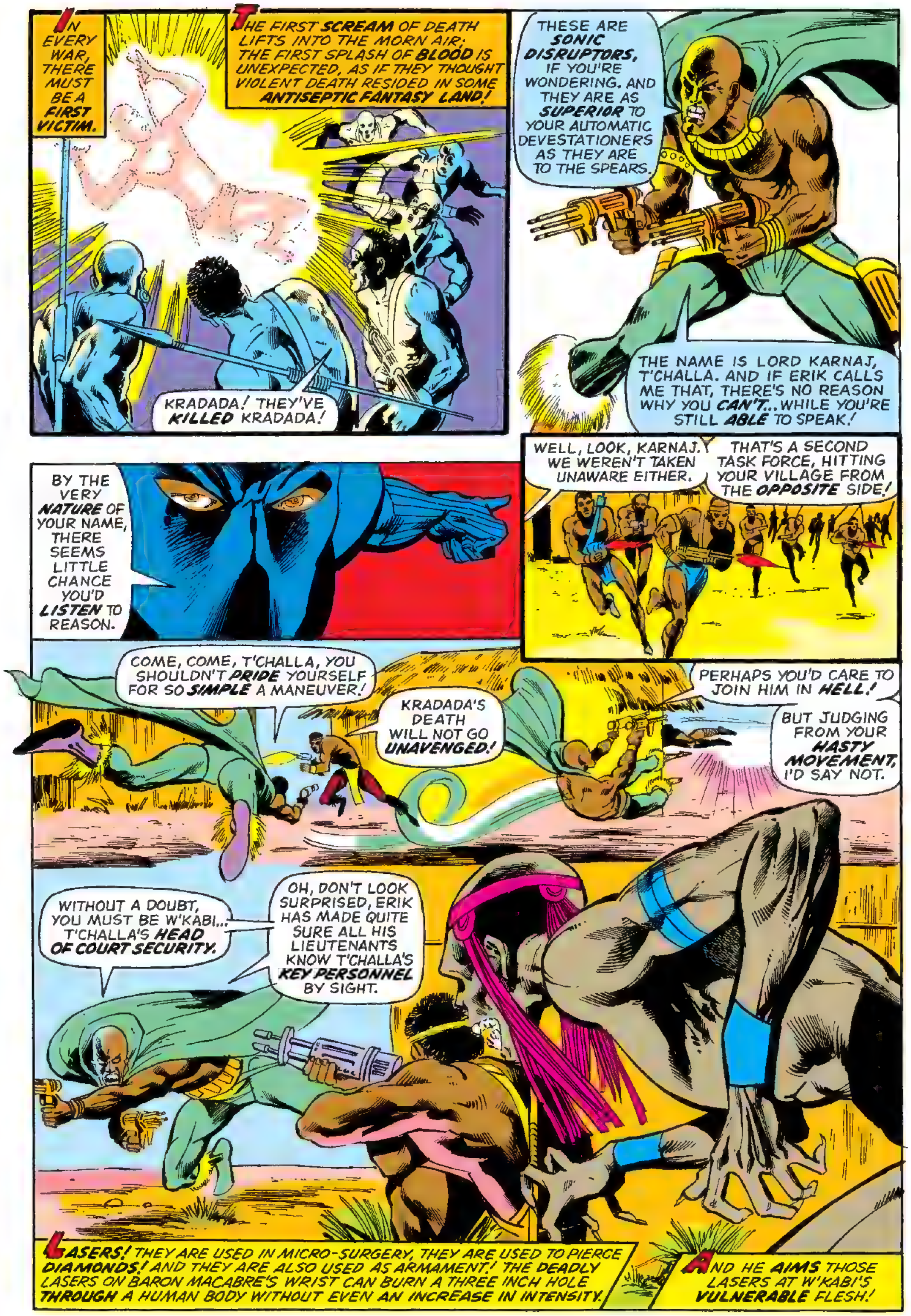
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER! TM
DON McGREGOR WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM & KLAUS JANSON ARTISTS
ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER GYNIS WEIN, COLORIST
ROY THOMAS EDITOR
FOR ONE MOMENT, HE IS FREE!
FOR ONE MOMENT, THERE IS ONLY THE MOLTEN DAWN SUN LIGHTING THE SKY A POET RED AND THE AIR RACING COOLY PAST HIM AS HE DROPS IN FREE FORM FLIGHT.
FOR THIS ONE MOMENT, HE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE BLACK PANTHER!
AS HE LEAPS WITH GRACEFUL PRECISION, A HUMAN PARAGON OF THE ANIMAL HE IS NAMED AFTER, HE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE T'CHALLA, KING OF THE WAKANDAS, EITHER--
--AND AS HE FLEXES AND SPRINGS FLUIDLY FROM ONE ROCKY OUTCROPPING TO THE NEXT, THE BURDENS OF NOBILITY ARE FLEETINGLY LIFTED.
AND THEN HE LANDS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PRECIPICE... AND THE MOMENT ENDS...AND HE IS ONCE MORE ALL OF THOSE THINGS.
PANTHER'S RAGE:
ONCE YOU SLAY THE DRAGON!

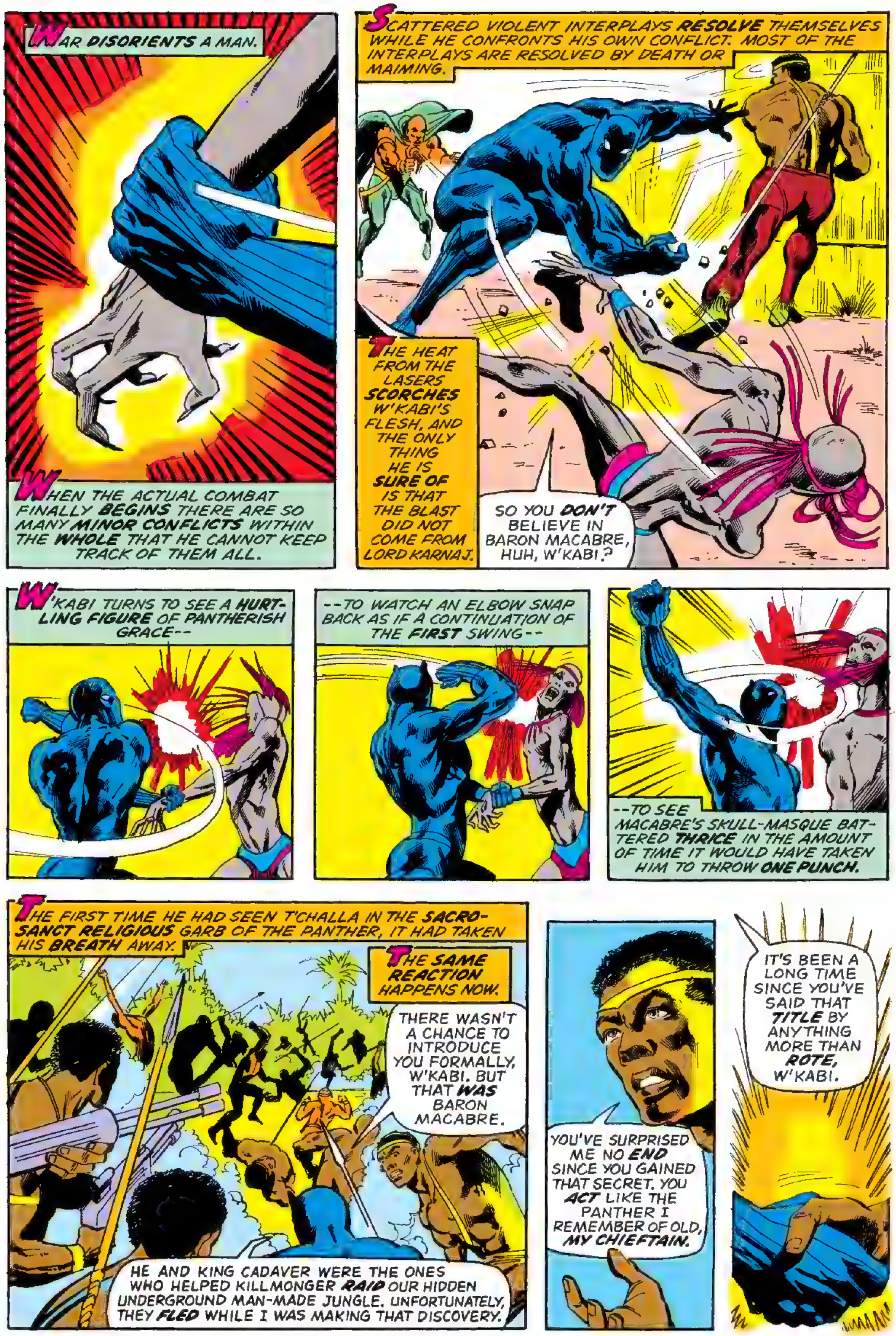

THE PANTHER MOVES, AS A GREAT CAT DOES WHEN STALKING MEAT! HE BARELY TOUCHES THE VEGETATION UNDERFOOT. AND SUDDENLY THE PROFUSION OF TANGLED LIMBS YIELD TO A FORTRESS. THIS IS N'JADAKA! HE KNOWS THE VILLAGE WAS NAMED AFTER ITS LEADER, KILLMONGER... BEFORE THE MURDEROUS REBEL CHANGED HIS NAME TO REFLECT HIS NEW IMAGE--
--AND HE KNOWS THAT FROM THIS QUIET, APPARENTLY PRIMITIVE SITE, ERIK KILLMONGER HAS LAUNCHED AN INSURRECTION THAT HAS BATHED WAKANDA IN BLOOD.
HE SENSES THAT W'KABI AND TAKU HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.
TAKU! CONTACT ALERT FORCE TWO OVER SHORTWAVE TRANS-MISSION. TELL THEM SYNCHRO-NIZED INFILTRA-TION BEGINS IN FIVE MINUTES!
IT'S UNFOR-TUNATE I COULD NOT CAPTURE KILLMONGER'S LIEUTENANTS, BARON MACABRE AND KING CADAVER, BUT YOU'VE WORKED WONDERS WITH THE ONE PRISONER WE DO HAVE, TAKU.
IF WE CAN TRUST THAT SERPENT-TONGUED VENOMM.
HIS REAL NAME IS HORATIO. WE TALKED IN FRIEND-SHIP. I HAVE BETRAYED A CONFIDENCE...
...AND IN SO DOING, HAVE BETRAYED MY-SELF AS WELL.
BETRAYAL!?? WHAT NON-SENSE DO YOU UTTER, TAKU? THIS VENOMM HAS AIDED THE KILLER WHO HAS SLAIN OUR PEOPLE.
TODAY WE BRING THE BATTLE TO KILL-MONGER'S HOME.
AH, YES, W'KABI. YOU HAVE DESIRED THIS DAY, HAVEN'T YOU?
TODAY WE SLAY YOUR DRAGON.
DRAGON? YOU SPEAK NONSENSE ALSO, MY CHIEFTAIN. THERE ARE NO DRAGONS HERE.
OH, THEY'RE HERE, W'KABI. BELIEVE ME, THERE ARE DRAGONS HERE.
AND WHEN THIS DAY HAS ENDED, LET ME KNOW IF YOU'D DESIRE MORE LIKE THEM.

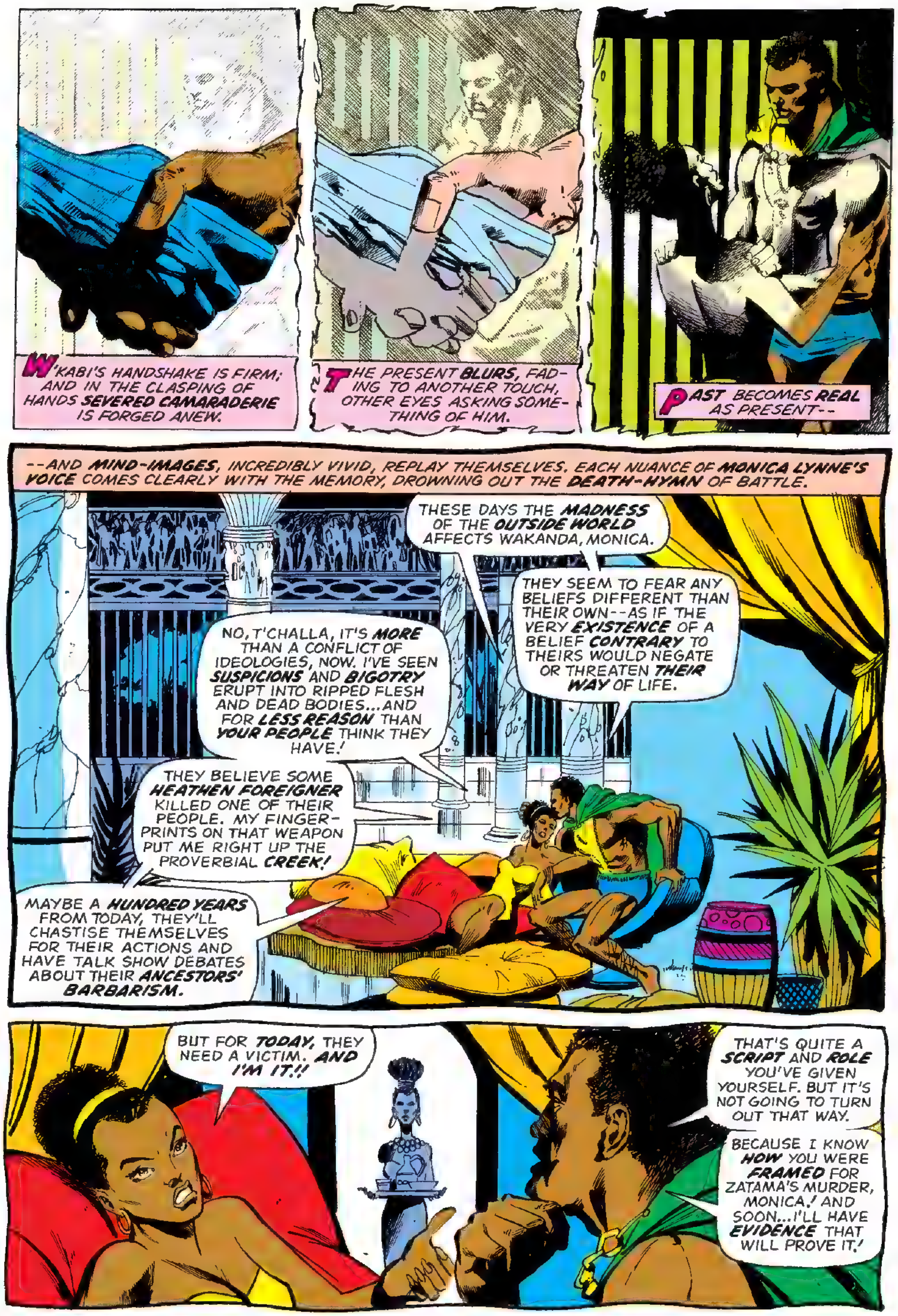

TAYETE HAS FLINCHED ONLY ONCE DURING THE NIGHT...WHICH ISN'T A BAD RECORD. HE HAS NOT ONCE ADMITTED TO HIS COMPANION, KAZIBE, THAT PANTHERISH EYES HAVE HAUNTED THE MAZES OF HIS DREAMS, AND HE FEELS EXTREMELY SECURE NOW AS THE VILLAGE AWAKENS.
THE PUNGENT AROMA OF MATOKE, MASHED AND STEAMED BANANAS, FILL THE COMPOUND.
YES, IF THERE IS ANY PLACE THAT IS SAFE FROM THAT PANTHER DEVIL... THIS IS THE PLACE!
TAYETE! LOOK QUICK!!
LOOK AT WHAT?
DIDN'T YOU SEE THEM?
SEE WHAT?
THOSE FIGURES RIGHT...
THERE?
I'VE NO TIME FOR YOUR CHILDISH GAMES, KAZIBE. LORD KARNAJ WILL SUMMON US SOON, AND I INTEND FOR MY BELLY TO BE FULL WITH MATOKE BEFORE HE CALLS.
TAYETE, WHERE'D THAT SHADOW COME FROM?
YOU MUST BE SEEING THINGS. YOU'VE BEEN HAVING NIGHTMARES SINCE THAT NIGHT IN THE CEMETERY.
I SAW HOW THAT PANTHER DEVIL AND EVEN OUR OWN MAN, BARON MACABRE, FRIGHTENED YOU.
COURSE, THEY DIDN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL.
TAYETE! ON THE ROOF!!
AND WHAT ARE YOU SEEING THERE? MORE SHADOWS?
NO, TAYETE. IT'S JUST THAT PANTHER DEVIL YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF.
AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO PUT THAT MATOKE IN YOUR BELLY...NOT ALL OVER YOUR FACE.



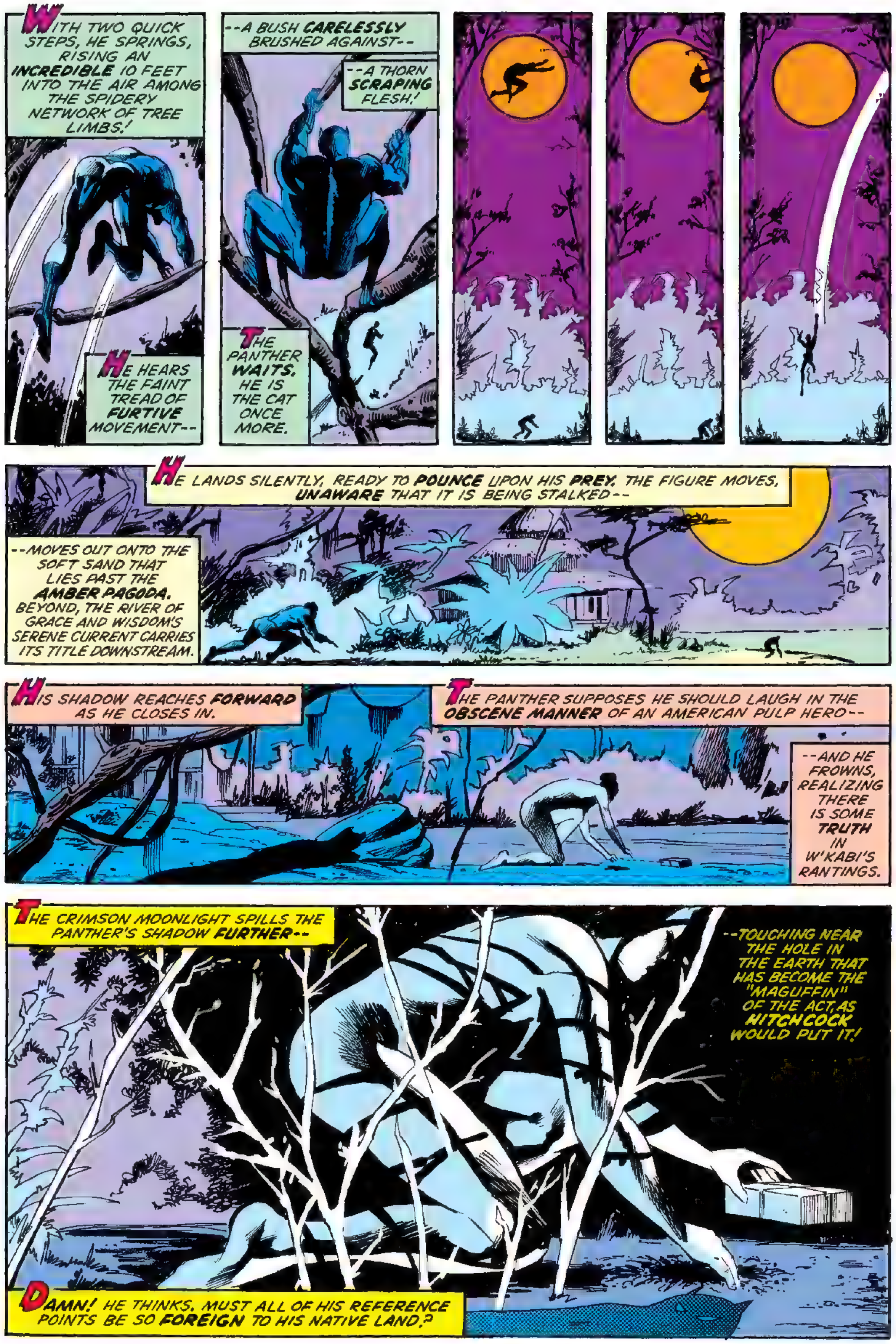
"NOT HERE," WHIMPERS TAYETE, A WHIMPER HE WILL NOT RECALL IN FUTURE TELLINGS OF THIS MOMENT. "HE CAN'T BE HERE!" BENEATH THE MASK, THE PANTHER ALMOST SMILES.
THE SMILE NEVER APPEARS. FROM THE CENTRAL EDIFICE, WARRIORS APPEAR, AND THE GAY DISPLAY OF PLUMAGE AND WOOD BURNISHED SHIELDS BELIES THE PURPOSE OF THEIR DRESS.
THE FAINT TRACE OF HUMOR LEAVES HIS EYES. THROUGH THE MASK SLITS, THE PUPILS OF HIS EYES SEEM TO BURN IN AMBER AGONY. THIS IS NOT A DAY FOR HAPPY MEMORIES!
KEEP YOUR WEAPONS STILL, WARRIORS, AND LISTEN TO MY WORDS--
--OR ELSE THIS PLACE WILL BECOME A BATTLEGROUND BATHED IN BLOOD!
THIS IS A DAY OF DEATH!
W'KABI, HAVE YOUR FORCE KEEP THEIR AUTOMATIC DEVASTATIONERS AT THE READY!
YOU MAY THINK THESE STRANGE WEAPONS ARE LESS DEADLY THAN YOUR SPEARS. THEY AREN'T!
AND THEY'VE YET TO BUILD A WEAPON THAT WILL NOT KILL!
YOU'D DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT YOURSELF, T'CHALLA.
AND REALLY... DID YOU ACTUALLY HOPE TO TAKE US UNPREPARED?
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF--
--AFTER THE HYDRAULIC SYSTEMS STRIP AWAY THE FACADE OF PRIMITIVISM YOU SO OBVIOUSLY FELL FOR.
ERIK... THAT'S KILLMONGER, T'CHALLA... ERIK CALLS ME LORD KARNAJ. AND IF IT PLEASES HIM, SO BE IT.
JUST NOW, HE'S NOT HERE, BUT I'LL EXTEND THE COURTESY I'M SURE HE'D WISH FOR YOU!
KARNAJ THRUSTS ASIDE THE ROBES, AND WEAPONS UNLIKE ANY THE PANTHER HAS SEEN BEFORE COME UNSHEATHED IN A BLUR OF DESTRUCTION.


IN EVERY WAR, THERE MUST BE A FIRST VICTIM.
THE FIRST SCREAM OF DEATH LIFTS INTO THE MORN AIR; THE FIRST SPLASH OF BLOOD IS UNEXPECTED, AS IF THEY THOUGHT VIOLENT DEATH RESIDED IN SOME ANTISEPTIC FANTASY LAND!
KRADADA! THEY'VE KILLED KRADADA!
THESE ARE SONIC DISRUPTORS, IF YOU'RE WONDERING. AND THEY ARE AS SUPERIOR TO YOUR AUTOMATIC DEVESTATIONERS AS THEY ARE TO THE SPEARS.
THE NAME IS LORD KARNAJ, T'CHALLA. AND IF ERIK CALLS ME THAT, THERE'S NO REASON WHY YOU CAN'T...WHILE YOU'RE STILL ABLE TO SPEAK!
BY THE VERY NATURE OF YOUR NAME, THERE SEEMS LITTLE CHANCE YOU'D LISTEN TO REASON.
WELL, LOOK, KARNAJ. WE WEREN'T TAKEN UNAWARE EITHER.
THAT'S A SECOND TASK FORCE, HITTING YOUR VILLAGE FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE!
COME, COME, T'CHALLA, YOU SHOULDN'T PRIDE YOURSELF FOR SO SIMPLE A MANEUVER!
KRADADA'S DEATH WILL NOT GO UNAVENGED!
PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO JOIN HIM IN HELL!
BUT JUDGING FROM YOUR HASTY MOVEMENT, I'D SAY NOT.
WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU MUST BE W'KABI... T'CHALLA'S HEAD OF COURT SECURITY.
OH, DON'T LOOK SURPRISED, ERIK HAS MADE QUITE SURE ALL HIS LIEUTENANTS KNOW T'CHALLA'S KEY PERSONNEL BY SIGHT.
LASERS! THEY ARE USED IN MICRO-SURGERY, THEY ARE USED TO PIERCE DIAMONDS! AND THEY ARE ALSO USED AS ARMAMENT! THE DEADLY LASERS ON BARON MACABRE'S WRIST CAN BURN A THREE INCH HOLE THROUGH A HUMAN BODY WITHOUT EVEN AN INCREASE IN INTENSITY.
AND HE AIMS THOSE LASERS AT W'KABI'S VULNERABLE FLESH!

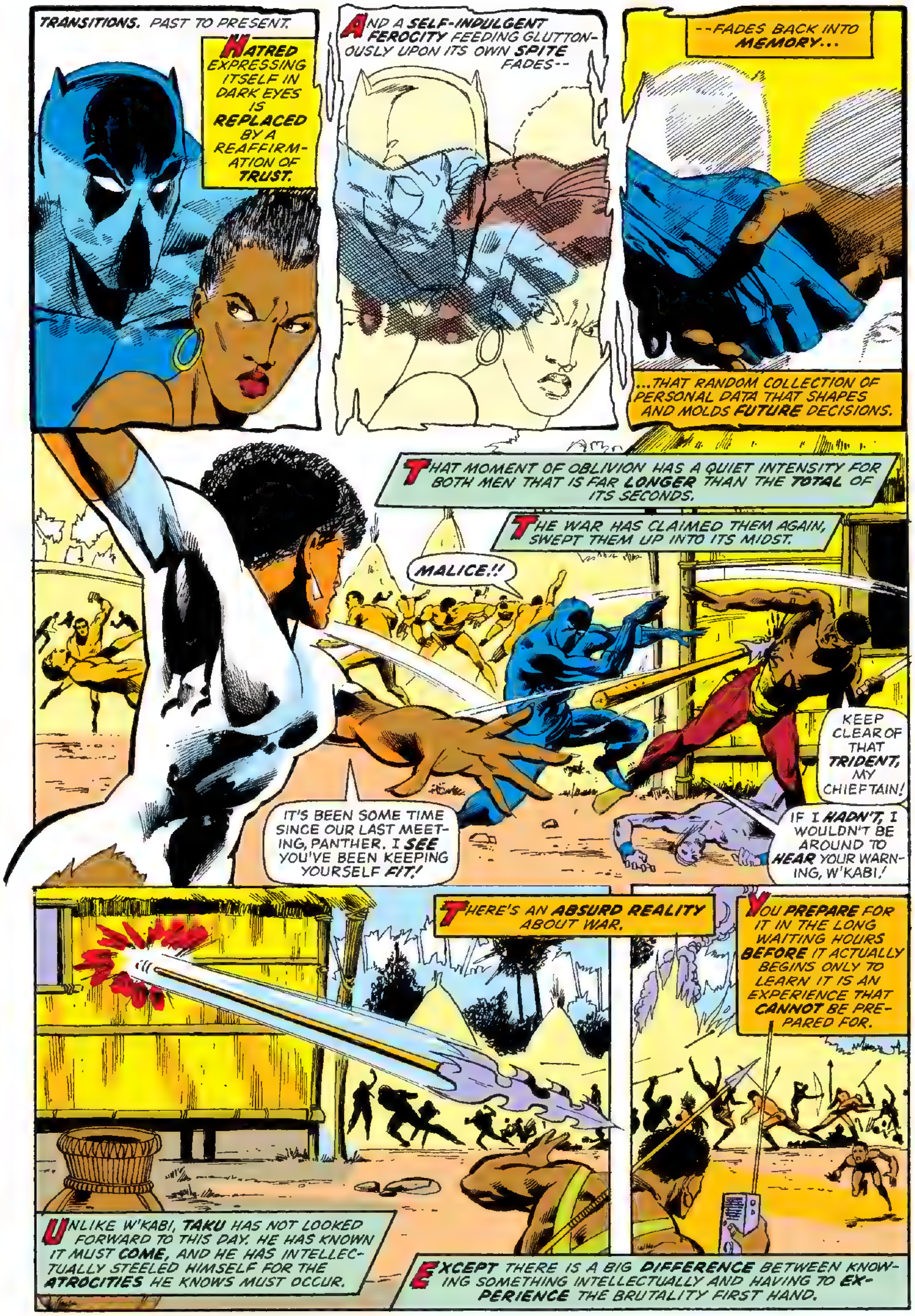

WAR DISORIENTS A MAN.
WHEN THE ACTUAL COMBAT FINALLY BEGINS THERE ARE SO MANY MINOR CONFLICTS WITHIN THE WHOLE THAT HE CANNOT KEEP TRACK OF THEM ALL.
SCATTERED VIOLENT INTERPLAYS RESOLVE THEMSELVES WHILE HE CONFRONTS HIS OWN CONFLICT. MOST OF THE INTERPLAYS ARE RESOLVED BY DEATH OR MAIMING.
THE HEAT FROM THE LASERS SCORCHES W'KABI'S FLESH, AND THE ONLY THING HE IS SURE OF IS THAT THE BLAST DID NOT COME FROM LORD KARNAJ.
SO YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN BARON MACABRE, HUH, W'KABI?
W'KABI TURNS TO SEE A HURTLING FIGURE OF PANTHERISH GRACE--
--TO WATCH AN ELBOW SNAP BACK AS IF A CONTINUATION OF THE FIRST SWING--
--TO SEE MACABRE'S SKULL-MASQUE BATTERED THRICE IN THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM TO THROW ONE PUNCH.
THE FIRST TIME HE HAD SEEN T'CHALLA IN THE SACROSANCT RELIGIOUS GARB OF THE PANTHER, IT HAD TAKEN HIS BREATH AWAY.
THE SAME REACTION HAPPENS NOW.
THERE WASN'T A CHANCE TO INTRODUCE YOU FORMALLY, W'KABI. BUT THAT WAS BARON MACABRE.
HE AND KING CADAVER WERE THE ONES WHO HELPED KILLMONGER RAID OUR HIDDEN UNDERGROUND MAN-MADE JUNGLE. UNFORTUNATELY, THEY FLED WHILE I WAS MAKING THAT DISCOVERY.
YOU'VE SURPRISED ME NO END SINCE YOU GAINED THAT SECRET. YOU ACT LIKE THE PANTHER I REMEMBER OF OLD, MY CHIEFTAIN.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE YOU'VE SAID THAT TITLE BY ANYTHING MORE THAN ROTE, W'KABI.

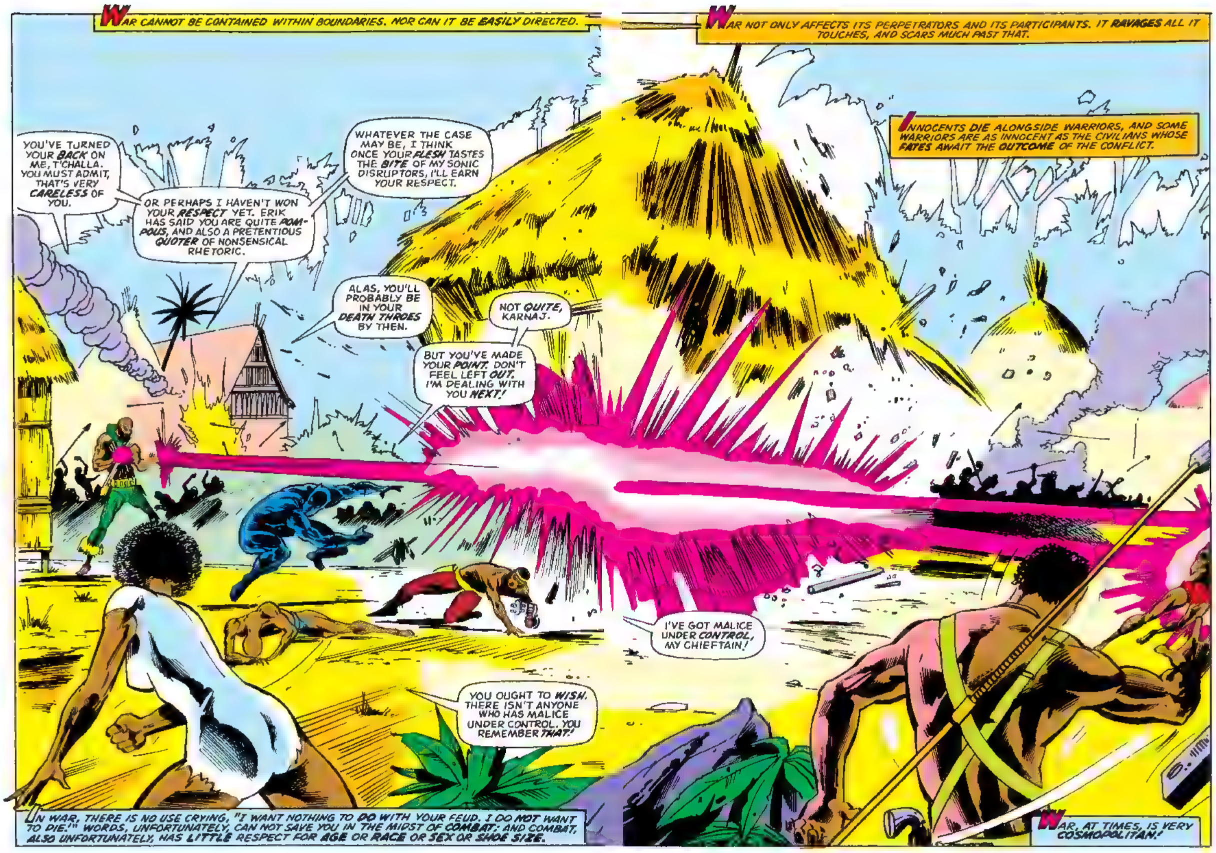

W'KABI'S HANDSHAKE IS FIRM; AND IN THE CLASPING OF HANDS SEVERED CAMARADERIE IS FORGED ANEW.
THE PRESENT BLURS, FADING TO ANOTHER TOUCH, OTHER EYES ASKING SOMETHING OF HIM.
PAST BECOMES REAL AS PRESENT--
--AND MIND-IMAGES, INCREDIBLY VIVID, REPLAY THEMSELVES. EACH NUANCE OF MONICA LYNNE'S VOICE COMES CLEARLY WITH THE MEMORY, DROWNING OUT THE DEATH-HYMN OF BATTLE.
THESE DAYS THE MADNESS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD AFFECTS WAKANDA, MONICA.
THEY SEEM TO FEAR ANY BELIEFS DIFFERENT THAN THEIR OWN--AS IF THE VERY EXISTENCE OF A BELIEF CONTRARY TO THEIRS WOULD NEGATE OR THREATEN THEIR WAY OF LIFE.
NO, T'CHALLA, IT'S MORE THAN A CONFLICT OF IDEOLOGIES, NOW. I'VE SEEN SUSPICIONS AND BIGOTRY ERUPT INTO RIPPED FLESH AND DEAD BODIES...AND FOR LESS REASON THAN YOUR PEOPLE THINK THEY HAVE!
THEY BELIEVE SOME HEATHEN FOREIGNER KILLED ONE OF THEIR PEOPLE. MY FINGERPRINTS ON THAT WEAPON PUT ME RIGHT UP THE PROVERBIAL CREEK!
MAYBE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY, THEY'LL CHASTISE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR ACTIONS AND HAVE TALK SHOW DEBATES ABOUT THEIR ANCESTORS' BARBARISM.
BUT FOR TODAY, THEY NEED A VICTIM. AND I'M IT!!
THAT'S QUITE A SCRIPT AND ROLE YOU'VE GIVEN YOURSELF. BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO TURN OUT THAT WAY.
BECAUSE I KNOW HOW YOU WERE FRAMED FOR ZATAMA'S MURDER, MONICA! AND SOON...I'LL HAVE EVIDENCE THAT WILL PROVE IT!

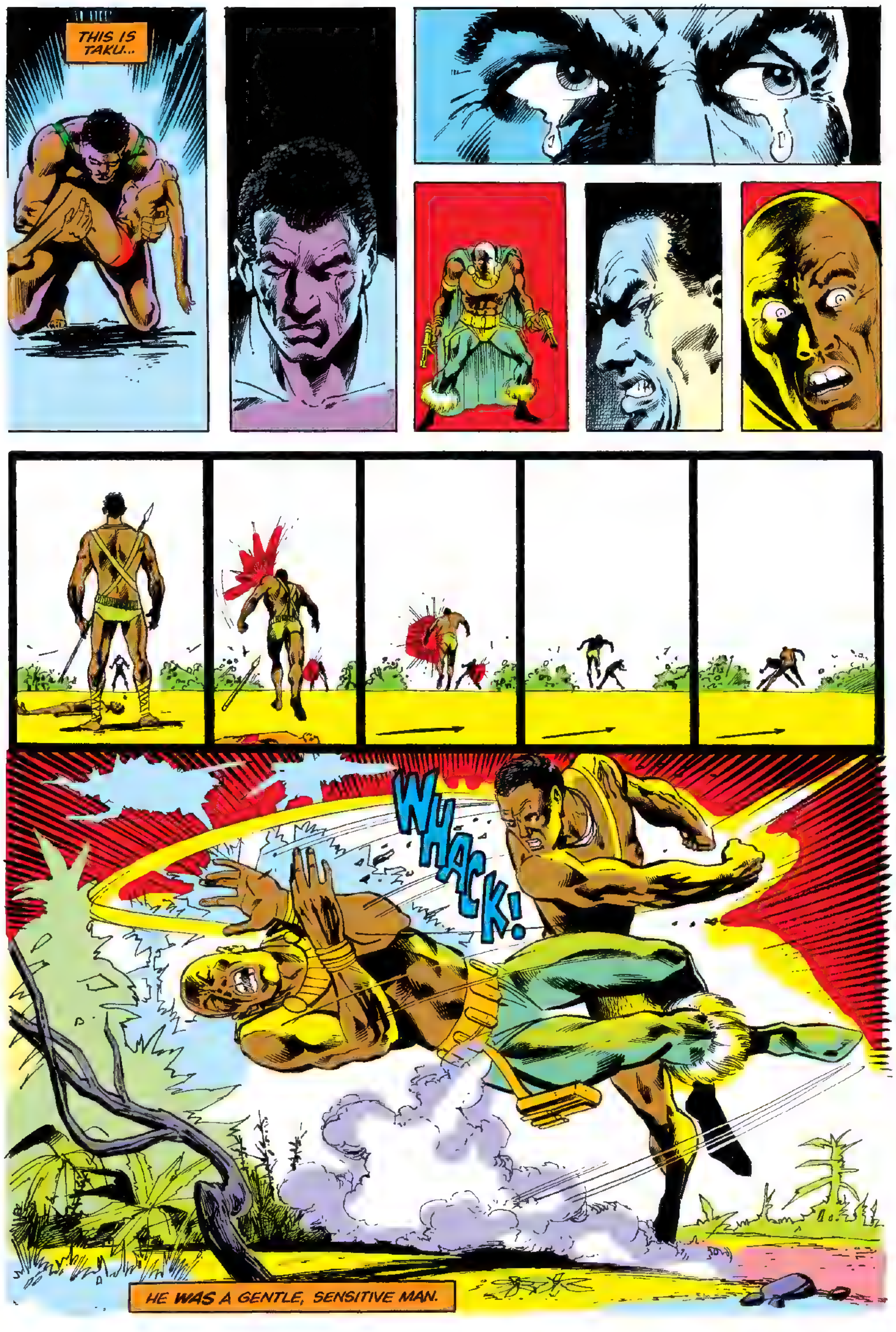
LIKE THE SHUTTER-EFFECT ON A SLIDE PROJECTOR CLICKING FROM ONE PAST IMAGE TO THE NEXT, EACH SCENE COMPLETE UNTO ITSELF IN ONE SEARING FLASH, THE PANTHER RECALLS THE LONELY NIGHT HOURS AFTERWARD.
HE CROUCHES. PATIENTLY.
AT FIRST, THE PASSING SHADOWY WILD-LIFE GIVES HIM WIDE BERTH--
--BUT AS THE HOURS STRETCH TO MIDNIGHT AND BEYOND, HE BECOMES A PART OF THE JUNGLE LAND-SCAPE.
UNTIL THE ROUTINE IS BROKEN... BY THE APPROACH OF A LESS CAUTIOUS HUMAN.
HE IS AS A BROTHER TO THE NIGHT.
WITHOUT PANIC, WITHOUT HASTE, HE USES THE BRANCH AS A SPRINGBOARD TO LAUNCH HIM-SELF, A NOCTURNAL MISSILE THAT HITS ITS TARGET WITH STUNNING IMPACT!
W'KABI!!
LET'S SEE IF I CAN GUESS WHY YOU'RE SKULKING AROUND OUT HERE! CHECKING UP ON YOUR "CRAZY" CHIEFTAIN?
YOU VANISHED FROM THE PALACE ROYAL.
NOW I FIND YOU CROUCHING IN TREES.
THOSE FOREIGN SHORES HAVE CHANGED YOU.
YOU ARE NOT THE SAME MAN WHO TOOK OVER AS THIS COUNTRY'S LEADER WHEN HIS FATHER WAS MURDERED BY OUTWORLDERS!
YOU'RE RIGHT, W'KABI.
I AM FAR WISER THESE DAYS. ONLY MY WISDOM COMES TOO SLOWLY--
--AND PERHAPS TOO LATE!
BE STILL, W'KABI!
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR ZATAMA'S MURDERER--
--AND TO USE ONE OF THOSE OUTWORLDER'S PHRASES, I THINK THE "GAME'S AFOOT!"


WITH TWO QUICK STEPS, HE SPRINGS, RISING AN INCREDIBLE 10 FEET INTO THE AIR AMONG THE SPIDERY NETWORK OF TREE LIMBS!
HE HEARS THE FAINT TREAD OF FURTIVE MOVEMENT--
--A BUSH CARELESSLY BRUSHED AGAINST--
--A THORN SCRAPING FLESH!
THE PANTHER WAITS. HE IS THE CAT ONCE MORE.
HE LANDS SILENTLY, READY TO POUNCE UPON HIS PREY. THE FIGURE MOVES, UNAWARE THAT IT IS BEING STALKED--
--MOVES OUT ONTO THE SOFT SAND THAT LIES PAST THE AMBER PAGODA. BEYOND, THE RIVER OF GRACE AND WISDOM'S SERENE CURRENT CARRIES ITS TITLE DOWNSTREAM.
HIS SHADOW REACHES FORWARD AS HE CLOSES IN.
THE PANTHER SUPPOSES HE SHOULD LAUGH IN THE OBSCENE MANNER OF AN AMERICAN PULP HERO--
--AND HE FROWNS, REALIZING THERE IS SOME TRUTH IN W'KABI'S RANTINGS.
THE CRIMSON MOONLIGHT SPILLS THE PANTHER'S SHADOW FURTHER--
--TOUCHING NEAR THE HOLE IN THE EARTH THAT HAS BECOME THE "MAGUFFIN" OF THE ACT, AS HITCHCOCK WOULD PUT IT!
DAMN! HE THINKS. MUST ALL OF HIS REFERENCE POINTS BE SO FOREIGN TO HIS NATIVE LAND?

ENOUGH TIME SPENT ON SELF-RECRIMINATION!
RECOGNIZE THIS, TANZIKA?
T'CHALLA!
I ASKED FOR AN ANSWER, TANZIKA. I KNOW WHO I AM. AND I ALSO KNOW THIS IS THE WEAPON YOU USED TO KILL ZATAMA!
W'KABI THOUGHT THIS WAS A SPEAR. BUT HE WAS WRONG! IT'S A SIMPLE TWO-SECTION SHISH KEBAB STICK THAT MONICA USED WHEN YOU SERVED DINNER...OR AT LEAST IT WAS--
--UNTIL YOU UNSCREWED THE TWO SECTIONS AND ADDED A THIRD SECTION TO THE MIDDLE--
--LEAVING MONICA'S PRINTS ALL OVER THE HANDLE OF YOUR MURDER WEAPON!
YOU CAN'T PROVE ANY OF THAT!
NOT FAST ENOUGH, TANZIKA!
I BAITED YOU EARLIER TONIGHT WITH THOSE LINES ABOUT EVIDENCE...HOPING THERE WAS SOME AND THAT YOU'D PANIC.
IT WAS THE MOTIVE I NEEDED. AND HERE IT IS!
PICTURES TAKEN AT A ROMANTIC TRYST? KEEPING MEMENTOES OF YOUR DAYS WITH ZATAMA, WERE YOU, TANZIKA?
KNOWING ZATAMA, HE'D WANT A THING LIKE THIS KEPT QUIET. ROMANTIC INTERLUDES WITH THE PALACE ROYAL'S LADIES MIGHT HAVE DILUTED HIS GOAL AS A SELF-MADE REVOLUTIONARY.
SPOILS THE IMAGE. RIGHT?
HE CALLED ME A CHILD.
HE CALLED ME PETTY AND IGNORANT! ME?!!
I TOLD HIM HE COULDN'T JUST USE ME AND THROW ME AWAY.
AND I'LL BE DOING WAKANDA A FAVOR PUTTING YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY!
CLOSE SHOT! BUT CLOSE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, TANZIKA.
AND THOUGH I CAN SENSE YOUR PAIN, I CANNOT EXCUSE HOW YOU USED MONICA'S VULNERABILITY..
--AND IT DISTURBS ME THAT YOU WILL NEVER REALIZE HOW YOU CALLOUSLY USED HER IN MUCH THE MANNER YOU FEEL ZATAMA USED YOU!


TRANSITIONS. PAST TO PRESENT.
HATRED EXPRESSING ITSELF IN DARK EYES IS REPLACED BY A REAFFIRMATION OF TRUST.
AND A SELF-INDULGENT FEROCITY FEEDING GLUTTONOUSLY UPON ITS OWN SPITE FADES--
--FADES BACK INTO MEMORY...
...THAT RANDOM COLLECTION OF PERSONAL DATA THAT SHAPES AND MOLDS FUTURE DECISIONS.
THAT MOMENT OF OBLIVION HAS A QUIET INTENSITY FOR BOTH MEN THAT IS FAR LONGER THAN THE TOTAL OF ITS SECONDS.
THE WAR HAS CLAIMED THEM AGAIN, SWEPT THEM UP INTO ITS MIDST.
MALICE.!!
IT'S BEEN SOME TIME SINCE OUR LAST MEETING, PANTHER. I SEE YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF FIT!
KEEP CLEAR OF THAT TRIDENT, MY CHIEFTAIN!
IF I HADN'T, I WOULDN'T BE AROUND TO HEAR YOUR WARNING, W'KABI.!
THERE'S AN ABSURD REALITY ABOUT WAR.
UNLIKE W'KABI, TAKU HAS NOT LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS DAY. HE HAS KNOWN IT MUST COME, AND HE HAS INTELLECTUALLY STEELED HIMSELF FOR THE ATROCITIES HE KNOWS MUST OCCUR.
YOU PREPARE FOR IT IN THE LONG WAITING HOURS BEFORE IT ACTUALLY BEGINS ONLY TO LEARN IT IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT CANNOT BE PREPARED FOR.
EXCEPT THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWING SOMETHING INTELLECTUALLY AND HAVING TO EXPERIENCE THE BRUTALITY FIRST HAND.


WAR CANNOT BE CONTAINED WITHIN BOUNDARIES. NOR CAN IT BE EASILY DIRECTED.
WAR NOT ONLY AFFECTS ITS PERPETRATORS AND ITS PARTICIPANTS. IT RAVAGES ALL IT TOUCHES, AND SCARS MUCH PAST THAT.
YOU'VE TURNED YOUR BACK ON ME, T'CHALLA. YOU MUST ADMIT, THAT'S VERY CARELESS OF YOU.
OR PERHAPS I HAVEN'T WON YOUR RESPECT YET. ERIK HAS SAID YOU ARE QUITE POMPOUS, AND ALSO A PRETENTIOUS QUOTER OF NONSENSICAL RHETORIC.
WHATEVER THE CASE MAY BE, I THINK ONCE YOUR FLESH TASTES THE BITE OF MY SONIC DISRUPTORS, I'LL EARN YOUR RESPECT.
ALAS, YOU'LL PROBABLY BE IN YOUR DEATH THROES BY THEN.
NOT QUITE, KARNAJ.
BUT YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT. DON'T FEEL LEFT OUT. I'M DEALING WITH YOU NEXT!
INNOCENTS DIE ALONGSIDE WARRIORS, AND SOME WARRIORS ARE AS INNOCENT AS THE CIVILIANS WHOSE FATES AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFLICT.
I'VE GOT MALICE UNDER CONTROL, MY CHIEFTAIN!
YOU OUGHT TO WISH. THERE ISN'T ANYONE WHO HAS MALICE UNDER CONTROL. YOU REMEMBER THAT!
IN WAR, THERE IS NO USE CRYING, "I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR FEUD. I DO NOT WANT TO DIE!" WORDS, UNFORTUNATELY, CAN NOT SAVE YOU IN THE MIDST OF COMBAT; AND COMBAT, ALSO UNFORTUNATELY, HAS LITTLE RESPECT FOR AGE OR RACE OR SEX OR SHOE SIZE.
WAR, AT TIMES, IS VERY COSMOPOLITAN!


THIS IS TAKU...
WHACK!
HE WAS A GENTLE, SENSITIVE MAN.

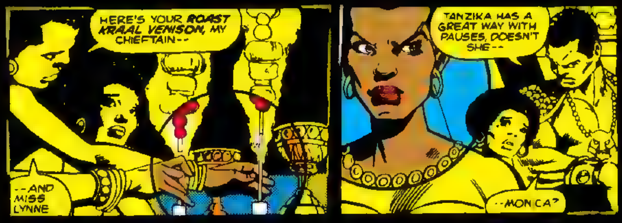
WAR IS NOT MERELY ONE SAVAGE BATTLE OR ONE DAY'S COLLECTION OF HEAVING, SWEATING BODIES POUNDING AWAY AT EACH OTHER WITH FISTS AND WEAPONS.
WAR SELDOM ENDS BECAUSE ONE BATTLE SUBSIDES!
WAR IS A TIME OF ANONYMITY. THE BEAST CAN BE RELEASED WITHOUT FEAR OF PUNISHMENT BY LAW OR GOD... OR SO IT IS SAID!
YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS KARNAJ. YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT THAT WORD MEANS!
YOUR LEADER PLAYS WITH WORDS AS HE DOES WITH LIVES.
S...S...STOP. PL...PLEASE.
LOOK AT THAT CHILD, KARNAJ.
I WANT THAT TO BE YOUR LAST SIGHT. I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHAT THE WORD CARNAGE MEANS.
TAKU, OLD FRIEND.
LET ME GO, MY CHIEFTAIN. I'M GOING TO KILL HIM.
WOULD THAT MEAN YOU ARE NO LONGER THE OBSERVER?
THE CHILD...
YOU'VE SEEN MEN GROW LOST IN THE JOURNEY TO VENGEANCE.
W'KABI'S DRAGON. REMEMBER?
I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR MEANING, MY CHIEFTAIN.
BUT I HAVE SEEN A SIDE OF TAKU TODAY THAT I THOUGHT HE LACKED--
--A SIDE I NOW WISH HE DID NOT HAVE.
THIS IS THE DAY YOU DESIRED, W'KABI. WAS IT ANYTHING LIKE YOU EXPECTED?
THEY WERE EVIL! WE COULD NOT LET THIS CONTINUE.
YOUR POINT IS WELL TAKEN, W'KABI--
--BUT OFT-TIMES, ONCE YOU SLAY THE DRAGON--
ITS BLOOD STAINS MORE THAN YOUR HANDS!
NEXT
LAND OF THE CHILLING MISTS

A COLLECTION OF PANTHERISH CLUES

(Or, what really happened the night Zatama died!)

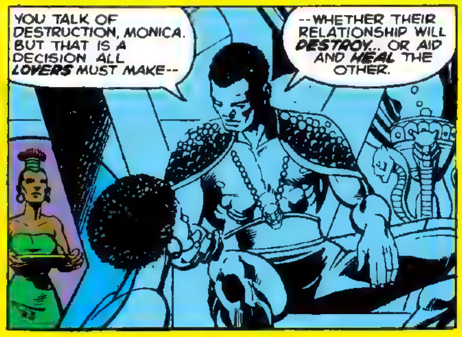
1

There's our villainess, Tanzika, bringing Monica the shish kebab stick. Give Tanzika credit, she's got this thing already planned. Note that little divider section. As of now there are only two, TWO sections in ONE!



2

Tanzika returns. The meal is finished and now she's ready to pick up what eventually is going to become a murder weapon. While Tanzika has thoughts of death, the Panther speaks of life.



3

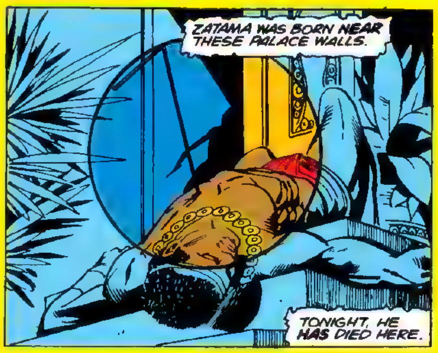
Little bit of visual story telling here while the verbal counterpart proceeds. Tanzika picks Monica's weapon up gingerly. No, Gang, that's not a spice we're talking about. What all of this leads up to is that Monica's prints have not been smeared or erased by other fingerprints...specifically, Tanzika's.

4

Note the two lines now marking the weapon. A middle section has been added, and Tanzika holds the spear within that middle section. If you haven't guessed why yet, turn in your jungle detective badge and ship on out on the nearest banana boat. And Banacek, Hec Ramsey, McCloud, Stu Bailey (Stu Bailey, where'd he come from?) all are drumming you from the loyal brotherhood of eye-glass super sleuths. The reason obviously, is so she won't mess up Monica's prints on the weapon.

5

A thin shadow flees. Real gothic horror stuff, except that real death is much more chilling than gothic horror. The spear is broken at the middle section (Remember, but now the spears are broken). Two meanings for one title, right?



6

The Panther is on to what's happening. THE GREASY SUBSTANCE he's referring to is the residue left from the venison. But forgive him for not catching on entirely. He did have a few other things on his mind.

This wraps it up, Gang. We hope you enjoyed playing this murder mystery with us, it was kind of a gas bringing it your way. And for all you super sleuths who blew it this time,

keep looking you never know when we're going to be giving you clues to other nefarious acts. And don't skip out on us before you read our JUNGLE REACTIONS. And when you're through, why not send your reaction. We'd love to hear from you,' Marvelite.

BLACK PANTHER *Artistry*

LAST ISSUE, WE SHOWED YOU JACK KIRBY'S ORIGINAL SKETCH FOR THE PANTHER, NOW WE BRING YOU THE HERETOFORE UNREVEALED DRAMA OF KIRBY'S FIRST LAYOUT FOR THE COVER OF THE PANTHER'S APPEARANCE IN THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR***, ISH #52 TO BE EXACT.

D'YA THINK THE COMPETITION ARE STILL TEARING OUT THEIR HAIR? SHEESH, BUT THAT MUST HURT!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

Dear Don, Gil and Klaus,

I have read JUNGLE ACTION #9 featuring the Black Panther. Great job, Guys!

I really enjoyed it.

When I started reading comics, I was never too pleased with Mr. Kane's style, even back when he did Gr**n L*nt*rn. But now, his recent work gives evidence to improvement. And Klaus Janson's efforts, which are beginning to resemble the talents of Dick Giordano, make Gil's pencils all that much better!

Now that I've finished with Gil and Klaus, I'd like to start on Don. I'm not referring to Mr. McGregor to commend him on his beautiful plotting or illustrious dialogue. I referred to the Panther scripter to compliment him on the idea of facing us with this great mystery.

I am speaking, of course, of the identity of Zatama's murderer (or murderess). Well, someone neglected to remind us to look for clues; but, instinctively, I did so...and found them!

Of course we know that Miss Lynne had to have been falsely accused. So who killed Zatama?

Tanzika, that's who!

Not only did we see that it was Tanzika's bracelet on the hand of the knocking assassin on page 17, but on page 11, panel 2, we saw that when Tanzika came and retrieved the shish kebab skewers, she held the one that was obviously T'Challa's, carelessly...while she picked up Monica's by the tip. Now when W'Kabi said that Monica's fingerprints were all over the skewer, that was because she had eaten with it.

I don't know how you came upon the great idea of how those clues would be presented, Don, but the inconspicuous manner in which you went about it was sheer genius.

Well, was I right? Huh? Huh?

OSIRISI
(No Address Given)

You called it, Osirisi! You put that Don McGregor right in his place, thinking he was being so subtle and devious. That'll teach him.

We've gone into that little mystery epic at great detail within the backup feature; and with the exception of realizing that Tanzika had added a middle section to the shish kebab stick, thereby turning it into a spear, you caught our Panther scripter right in the act. It's really crushed him.

Ah, cheer up, Don, you faked out a whole lotta sleuths out there. What'd you want, a perfect record?

What does he mean, that wouldn't be bad?

Dear Wakanda Jungle Beaters,

As a reprint mag, JUNGLE ACTION was wasted. And so was the Black Panther...until...the two were joined!

Avenger Black Panther is all right if it no longer interferes with his role as king. A king trapped by his subject's prejudices, his duties and a whole lot of other stuff that is just too much to go into in one letter, gives him a distinction he never had before.

I hope that conveys that I not only approve of what changes you've made in both Black Panther, the King, and JUNGLE ACTION. Let me put it this way, I'm a regular at my local comic outlet for each new issue of JUNGLE ACTION.

There was one sore spot with me though. Why did the Panther kill the rhino. Couldn't he have led it away from the village? He has the power to out-run and out-maneuver the animal, so the action was a senseless display of strength. The rhino was no longer interested in the child and the rhino is an endangered species. And what that scene added to the action, it detracted from what kind of man the Panther is supposed to be. Please watch this kind of thing in the future. Please!

Finally, with the introduction of Monica, the point is well illustrated that no matter the hue of skin, all Homo sapiens are alike. As a race, we are growing children.

I'll be looking for you in about sixty days.

JACK L. BANNOW
RR #2, Box 193
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Oh, boy, did we take it on the chin.

It seems like nigh on to everybody liked this issue of the Panther with the exception of the black rhinocerous scene. In defense, Don would like to state that he sincerely doubts that the Panther could outrun that creature. A rhinocerous moves at near 60 miles per hour (or so we understand) and that added on to his weight makes a formidable opponent. Also, the youth was not in a safe area, and the rhino being in the agitated state that it already was, could easily have found that young target once again.

And do you really think that a man without weapons could really believe he would be able to pull off such a daring rescue? Flesh and bone would shatter easily under that kind of weight and force, and though the Panther has incredible stamina and strength, he certainly couldn't face up to a pounding of that type. One slip and the rhino probably wouldn't have stopped doing the cha-cha all over T'Challa until he was hamburger.

Please don't be too harsh on our Jungle King. We think it was a courageous act to undertake, and he certainly is concerned with wild-life conservation.

Okay, Don, they've heard your side of it now...but what we're wondering is how you're going to explain away that crocodile scene in JUNGLE ACTION #10.

Be here, next ish, Gang, and see what further misadventures transpire in our lilting letters page. By the way, how does a letters page lilt anyhow?

Dear Roy, Don, Gil, and Klaus,

PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES...and how!

Issue #9 of JUNGLE ACTION followed the previous stories smoothly as silk, despite the extended waiting period. I've a hunch that with all the superb work going into this series, monthly publication of the Black Panther will occur within the next year. Despite the fact that Rich Buckler has left the strip, Gil Kane did an ample job.

Happily, Don McGregor seems to be a permanent fixture on The Black Panther, so I thank Wakanda for big favors. As each new issue comes out, things get more complicated. Yet, Don, I have the distinct feeling you have everything under control, and that you're just unwinding a previously coiled spring. When I read a many issue extravaganza in various mags, I sometimes think the writer himself has gotten lost along the way in all the machinations. Not so here; there's a professional polish hard to come by except with lots of sweat and talent.

I hope this delving into the society of Wakanda continues long after the current "Killmonger" series is over. It's fascinating. The complex problems of a single group of people commanding super-technology, yet uneasy about the head which wears the crown, bears ominous resemblance to another group I can think of...us!

After carefully reviewing this issue and the ones preceding it, certain things become evident about your writing, Don. The characterizations for one thing. Everybody, from the villains to minor court figures, is distinctly drawn.

Nowhere was this better shown than JA #9.

The divergence of reaction between the father and mother of the boy T'Challa saved from the rampaging rhino, was really true-to-life. Contrasted with the hard-nosed prejudice of Karota, "A woman of the Earth", was the incredulity of her husband, M'Jumbak, that their chieftain should remember his name.

Perhaps "Tanzika has a great way with pauses" but Don, you definitely have a way with captions. Those captions *really* say something. Rather than simply describing the action of a particular panel in verbal terms, these captions embellish the art, give it significance. The captions used during the rhino sequence, when Kantu's parents appear, in the palace with T'Challa, etc., all add a great deal to what we are seeing. This is really an added dimension, Don, that makes your series so enjoyable, as well as thought provoking.

I'll close by simply thanking Rich, Gil and Don for one of the best new series of the year.

I mean that.

And best of luck in the future.

Don't take any wooden W'Kabi's.

RALPH MACCHIO
188 Wilson Drive
Cresskill, N.J. 07626

Why not, Ralph? A wooden W'Kabi placed in the living room is a great ornamental piece and they come in five decorative shades of color. If you can't find them in your Sears Roebuck catalogue, don't worry, they're probably just out of stock. We understand that in the mythical land of the Wakanda Con they have these little Taku philosophy dolls that speaketh proverbs each time you pull this little string.

We might lack a little of Taku's lyrical imagry, Ralph, but in our own way we'd like to thank you for your incisive commentary. We know you're one of Marvel's major letter writers; and believe us, we appreciate the time and effort you take in setting down your ideas to us. That goes for the rest of you Marvelites, also, especially the ones that often don't see print. It's only because of lack of room, but those letters are read and appreciated.

Don asks that we make just one last comment and add that he's glad you liked the utilization of captions in these books and is glad they came off the way he intended them. Thanks, Amigo.

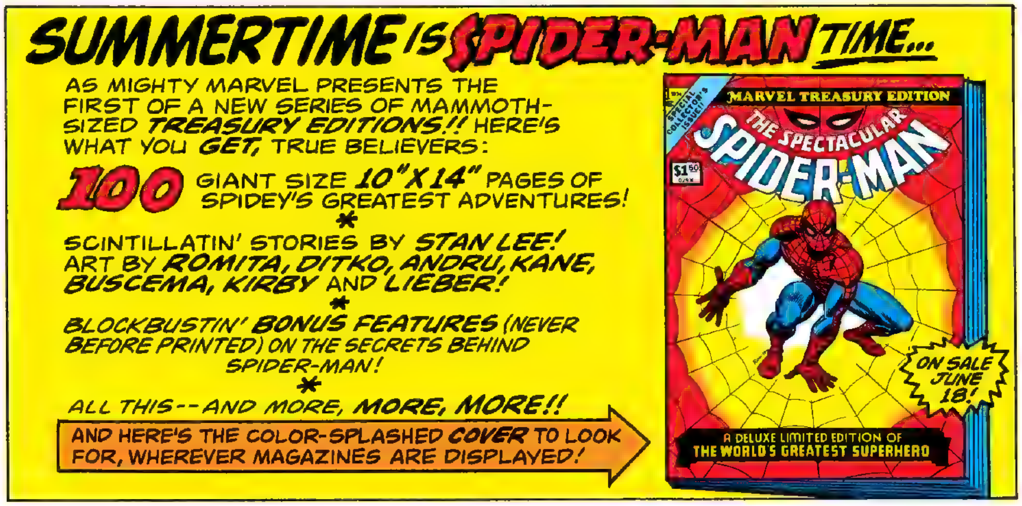
Of course, Artie Simek has this *other* philosophy about Don and his captions.....

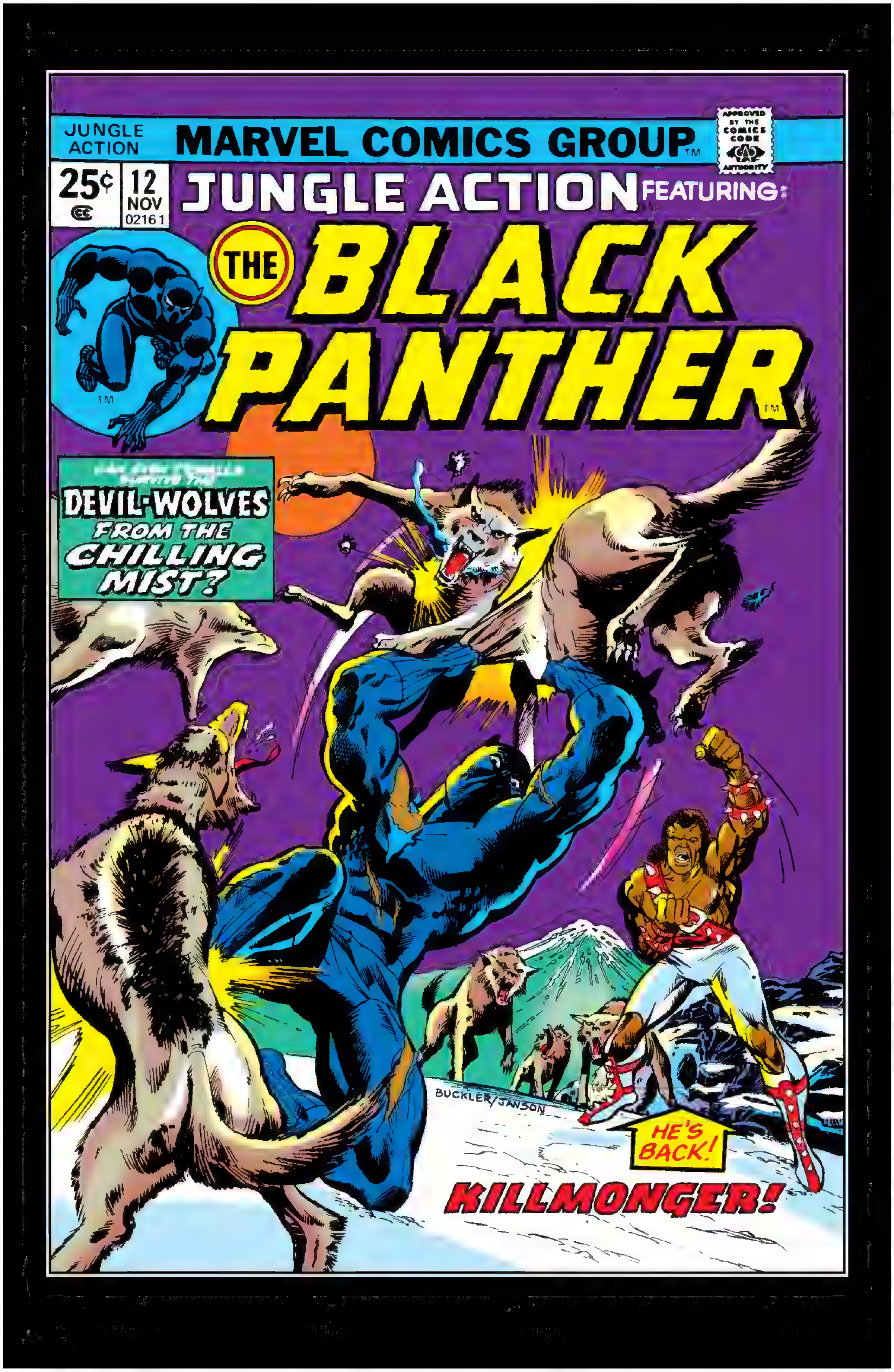
Hey, Artie, did he manage to keep off the letterer's hate list this ish? What's *that?*

Never mind, Don. You don't *want* to hear what he said.

NEXT ISSUE: We have this tentative title, see. It's called "Blood Stains on Virgin Snow!" Now that may not be the title our next "Panther's Rage" saga ends up with, but it is the working title, and we bet it's got your curiousity aroused already. Believe us when we say, you haven't seen anything as savage, as brutal, as dangerous as the Panther's foray in the Land of the Chilling Mist, where he meets Sombre, Oracle of the Altar of Resurrection! Yeah, but that's not all that's happening, Pantherite, cause Killmonger is back, and he's back with a vengeance in his first appearance since JUNGLE ACTION #7. Everything comes apart at the seams, as the Panther faces a chilling death, a pack of ferocious wolves...and the dreaded WHITE GORILLAS! You read it right the first time, Effendi. We've got a feeling you're going to want to be here. We'll keep the safari waiting for ya! Hang in there!

THIS IS IT! YOUR
MARVEL VALUE STAMP
FOR THIS ISSUE!
CLIP 'EM AND
COLLECT 'EM!




JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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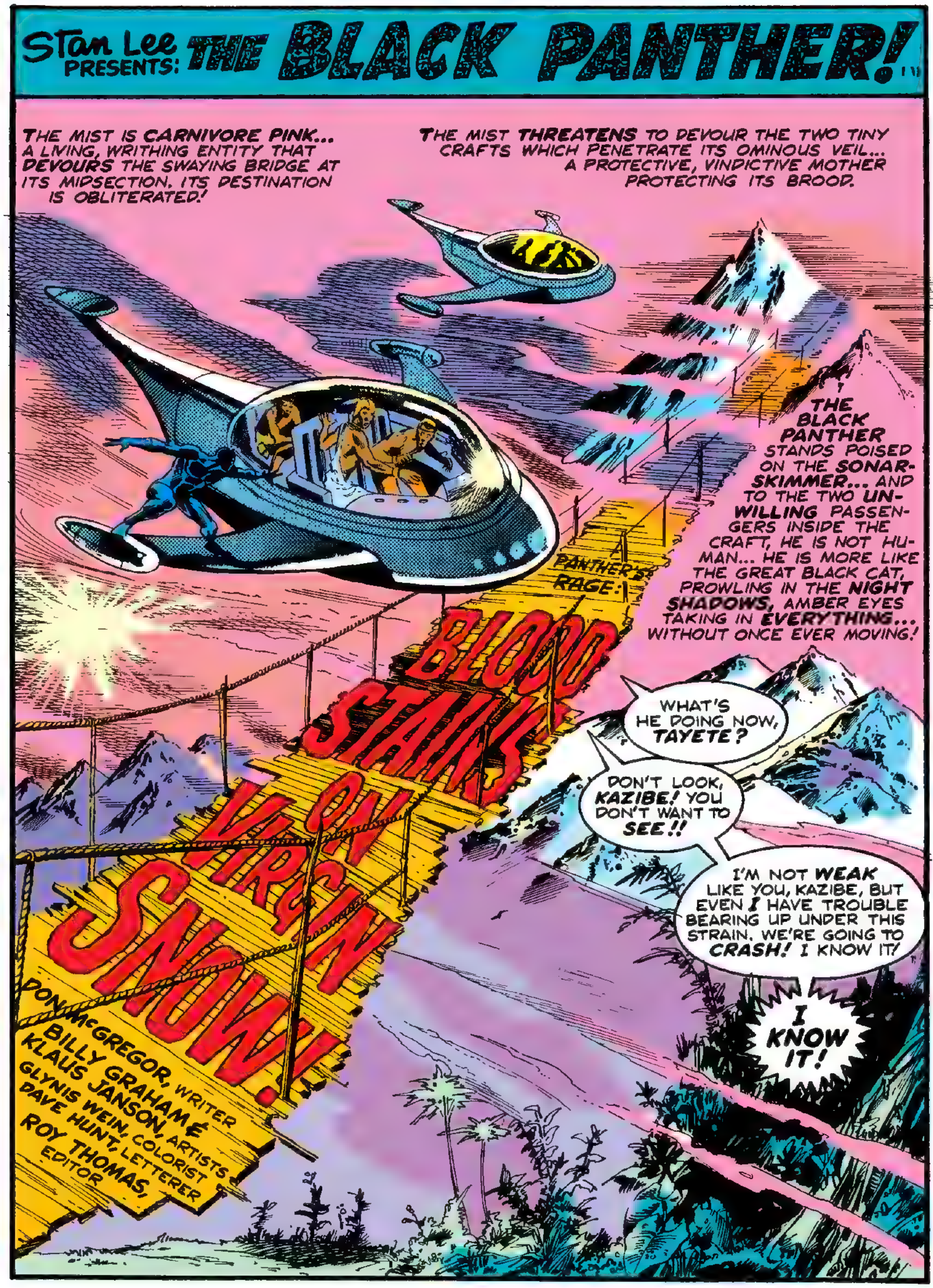
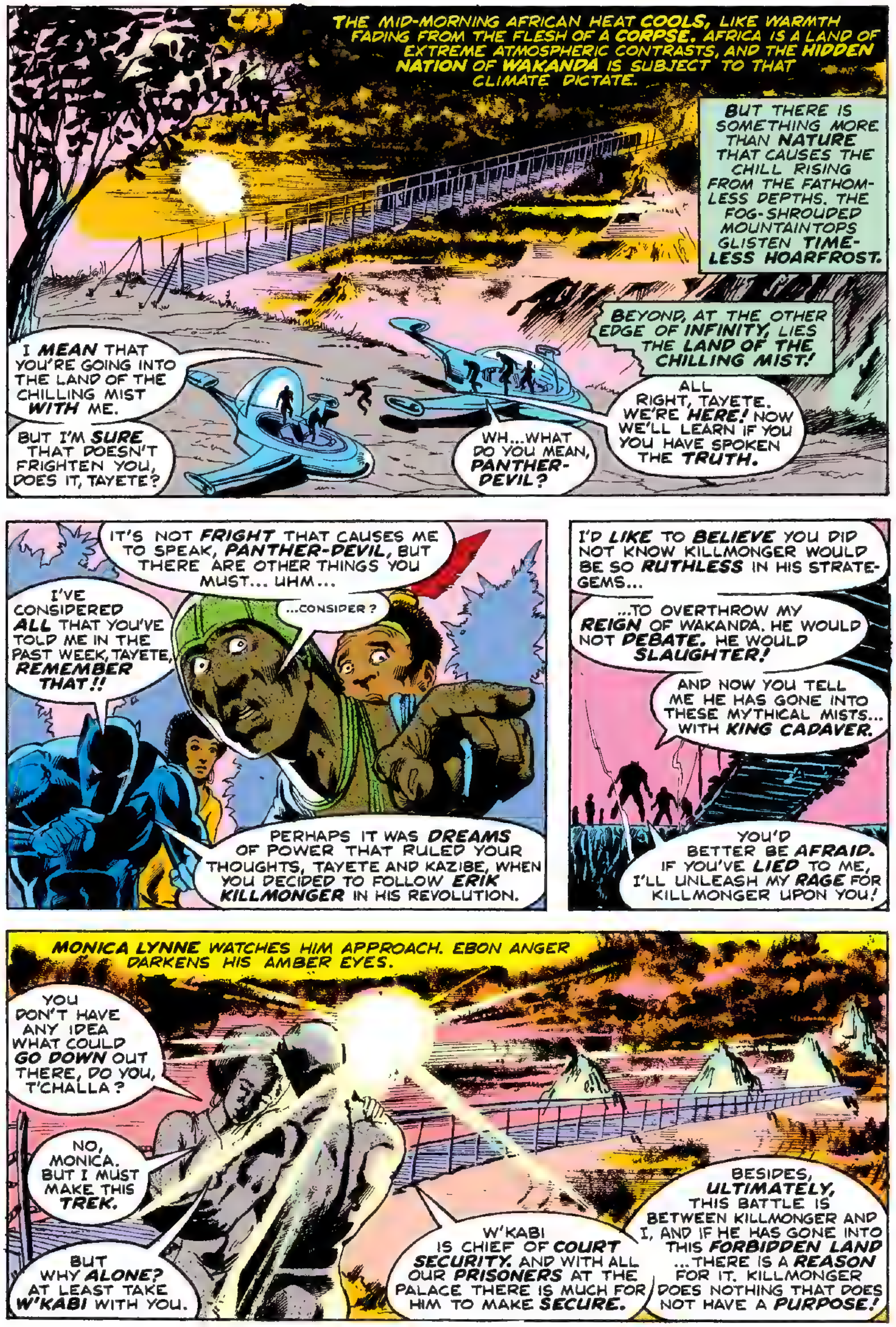
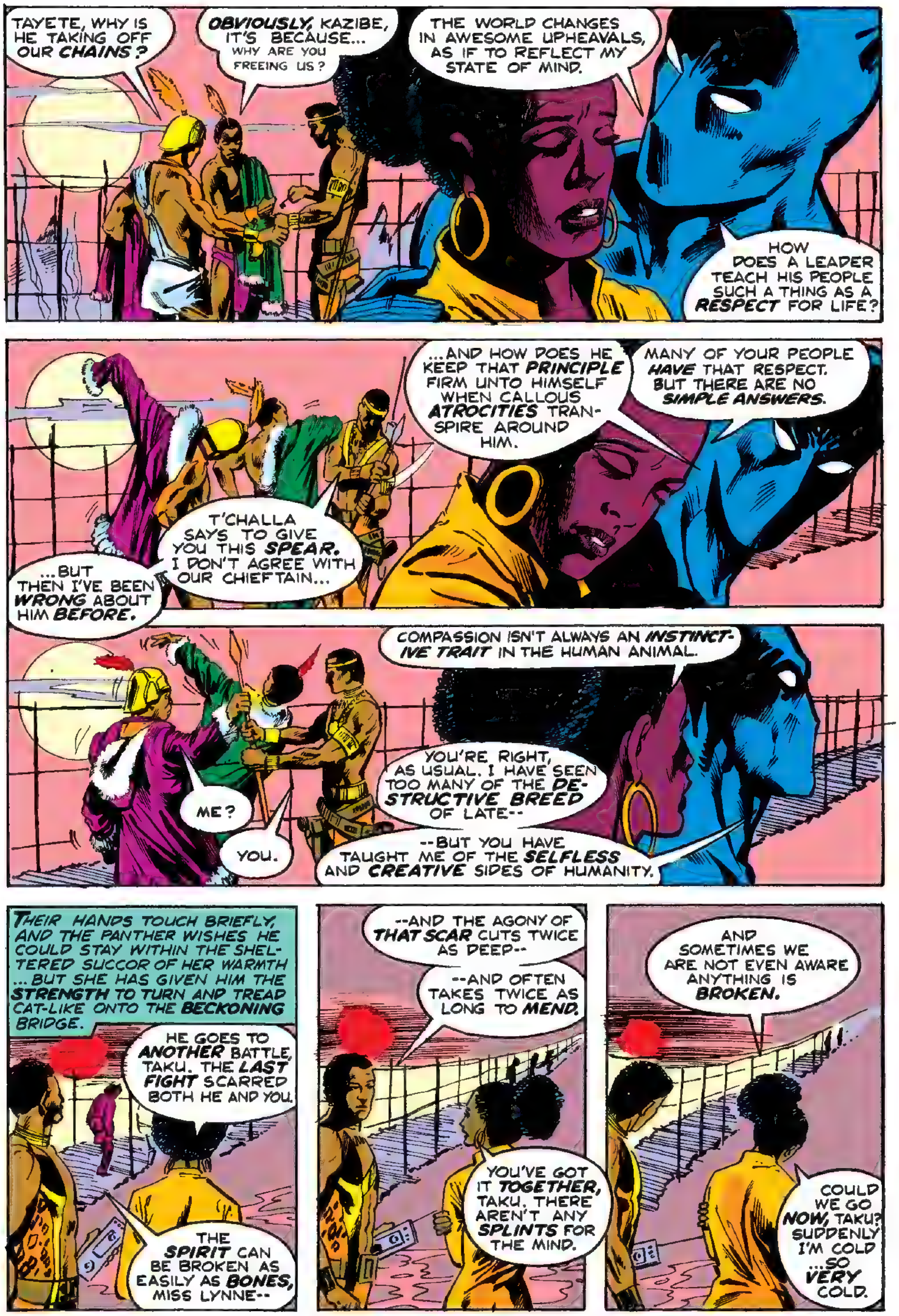
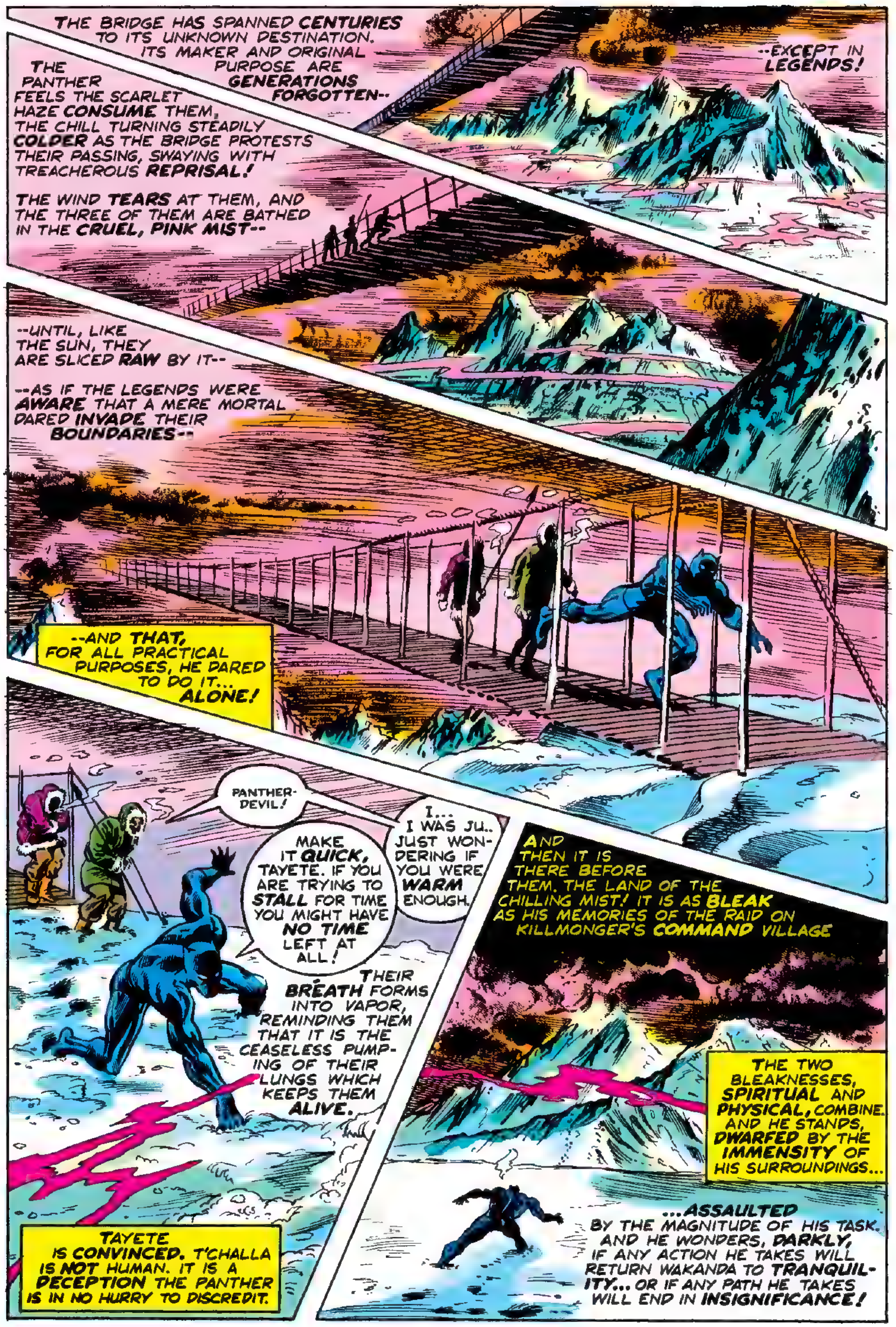
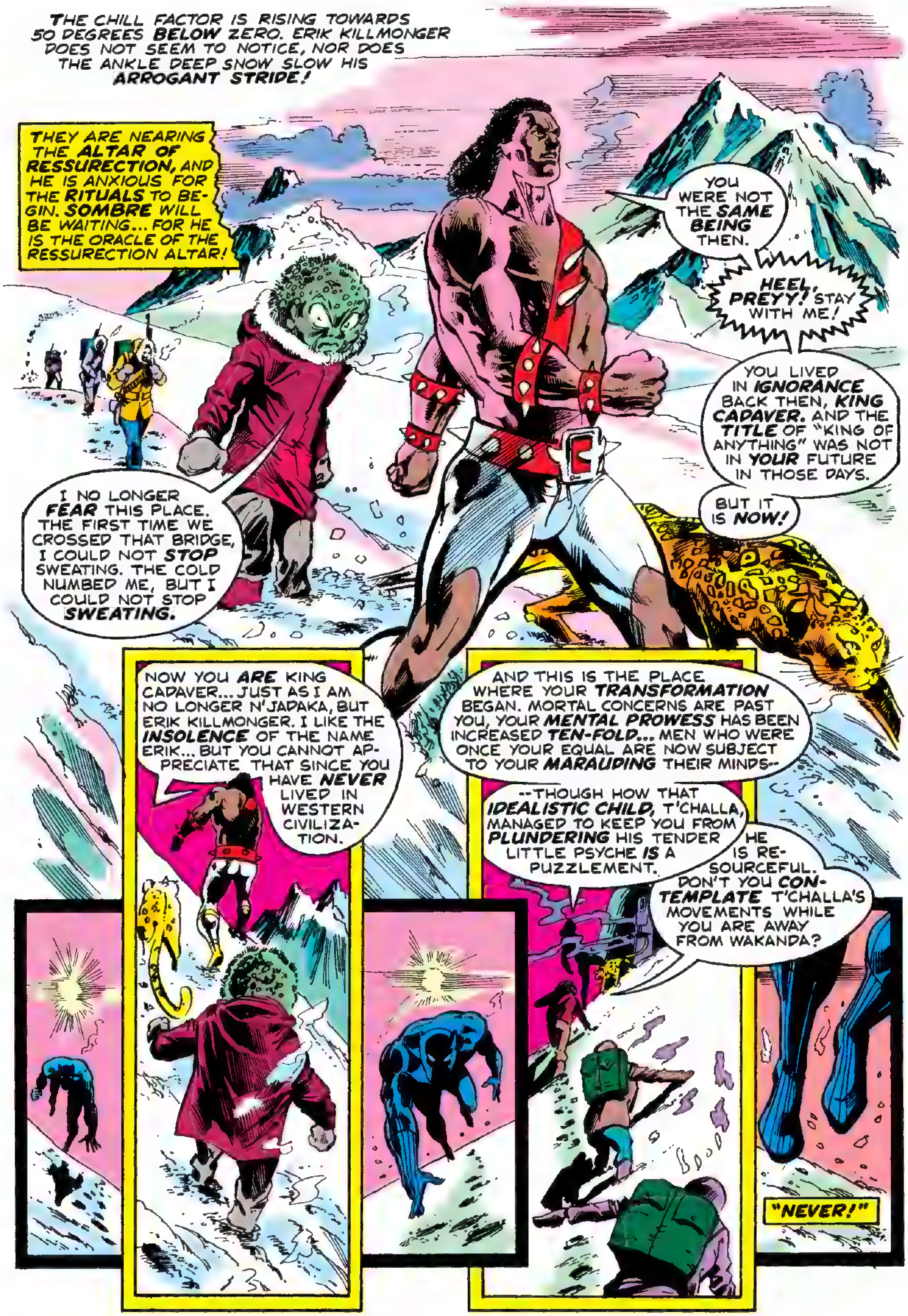
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
DEVIL-WOLVES FROM THE CHILLING MIST?
BUCKLER/JANSON
HE'S BACK!
KILLMONGER!

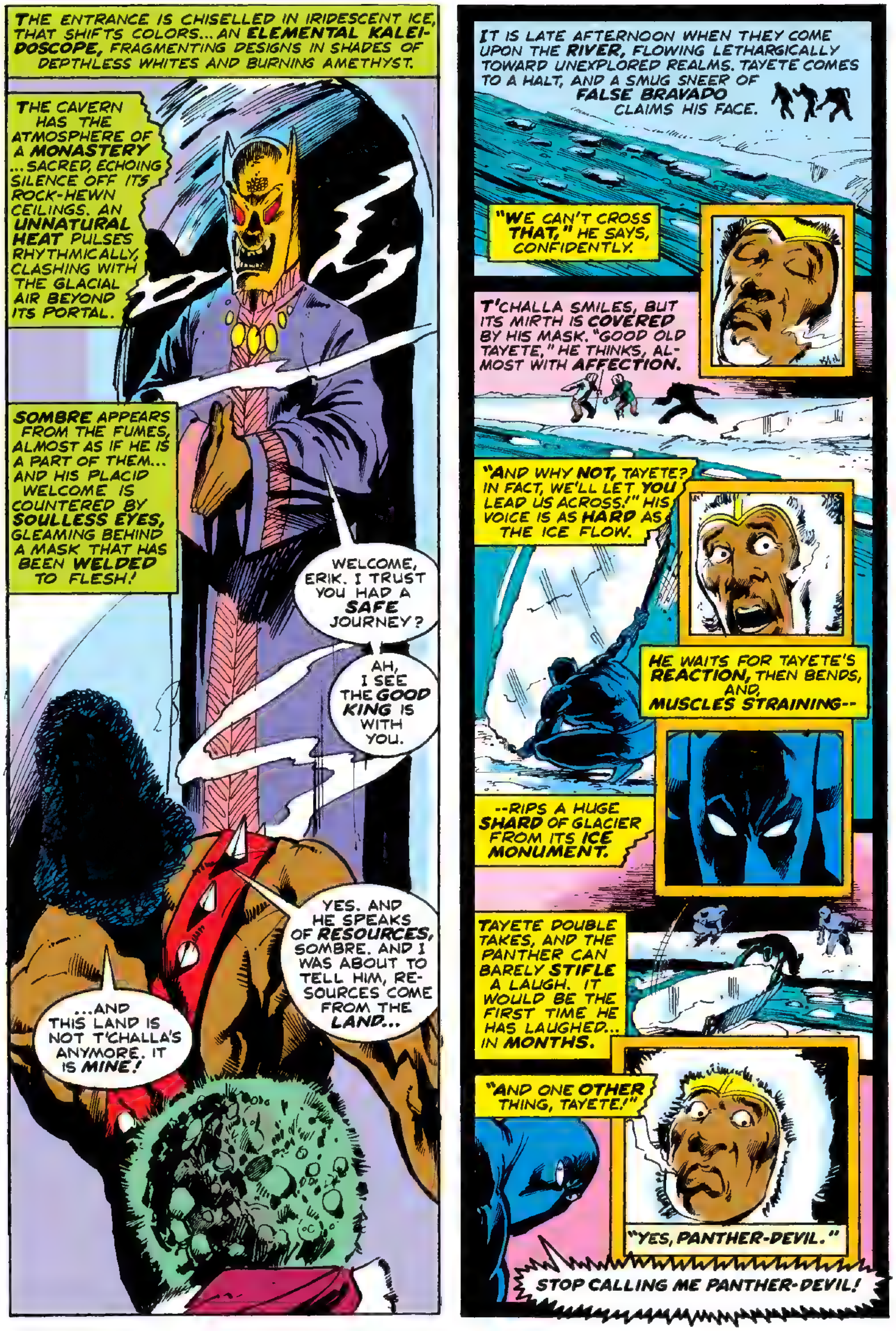

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!
THE MIST IS CARNIVORE PINK... A LIVING, WRITHING ENTITY THAT DEVOURS THE SWAYING BRIDGE AT ITS MIDSECTION. ITS DESTINATION IS OBLITERATED!
THE MIST THREATENS TO DEVOUR THE TWO TINY CRAFTS WHICH PENETRATE ITS OMINOUS VEIL... A PROTECTIVE, VINDICTIVE MOTHER PROTECTING ITS BROOD.
THE BLACK PANTHER STANDS POISED ON THE SONAR-SKIMMER... AND TO THE TWO UNWILLING PASSENGERS INSIDE THE CRAFT, HE IS NOT HUMAN... HE IS MORE LIKE THE GREAT BLACK CAT, PROWLING IN THE NIGHT SHADOWS, AMBER EYES TAKING IN EVERYTHING... WITHOUT ONCE EVER MOVING!
PANTHER'S RAGE:
BLOOD STALKS ON VIRGIN SNOW!
DON McGREGOR, WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM & KLAUS JANSON, ARTISTS
GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST
DAVE HUNT, LETTERER
ROY THOMAS, EDITOR
WHAT'S HE DOING NOW, TAYETE?
DON'T LOOK, KAZIBE! YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE!!
I'M NOT WEAK LIKE YOU, KAZIBE, BUT EVEN I HAVE TROUBLE BEARING UP UNDER THIS STRAIN. WE'RE GOING TO CRASH! I KNOW IT!
I KNOW IT!

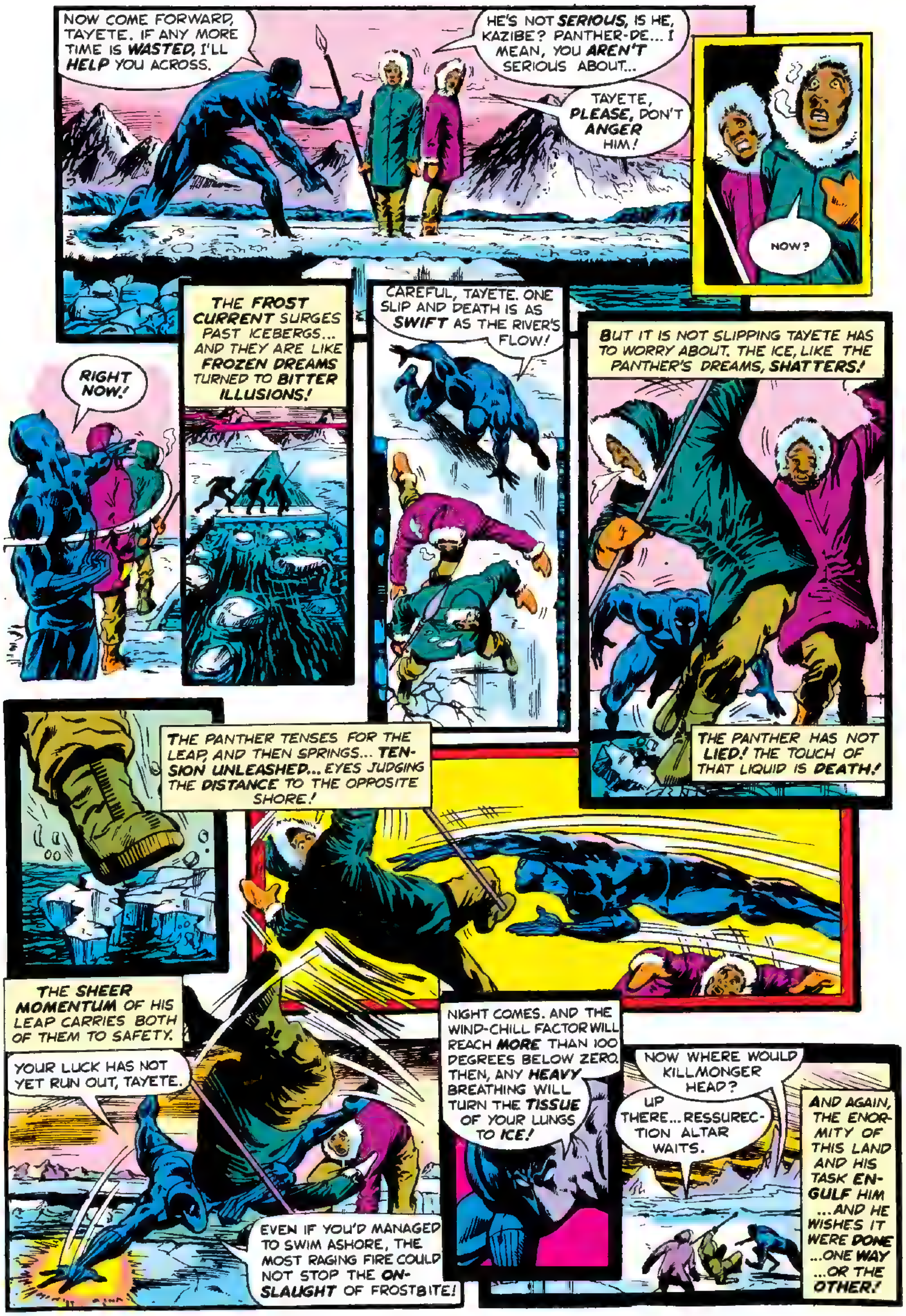

THE MID-MORNING AFRICAN HEAT COOLS, LIKE WARMTH FADING FROM THE FLESH OF A CORPSE. AFRICA IS A LAND OF EXTREME ATMOSPHERIC CONTRASTS, AND THE HIDDEN NATION OF WAKANDA IS SUBJECT TO THAT CLIMATE DICTATE.
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING MORE THAN NATURE THAT CAUSES THE CHILL RISING FROM THE FATHOMLESS DEPTHS. THE FOG-SHROUDED MOUNTAINTOPS GLISTEN TIMELESS HOARFROST.
BEYOND, AT THE OTHER EDGE OF INFINITY, LIES THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST!
ALL RIGHT, TAYETE. WE'RE HERE! NOW WE'LL LEARN IF YOU YOU HAVE SPOKEN THE TRUTH.
WH...WHAT DO YOU MEAN, PANTHER-DEVIL?
I MEAN THAT YOU'RE GOING INTO THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST WITH ME.
BUT I'M SURE THAT DOESN'T FRIGHTEN YOU, DOES IT, TAYETE?
IT'S NOT FRIGHT THAT CAUSES ME TO SPEAK, PANTHER-DEVIL, BUT THERE ARE OTHER THINGS YOU MUST... UHM...
...CONSIDER?
I'VE CONSIDERED ALL THAT YOU'VE TOLD ME IN THE PAST WEEK, TAYETE, REMEMBER THAT!!
PERHAPS IT WAS DREAMS OF POWER THAT RULED YOUR THOUGHTS, TAYETE AND KAZIBE, WHEN YOU DECIDED TO FOLLOW ERIK KILLMONGER IN HIS REVOLUTION.
I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE YOU DID NOT KNOW KILLMONGER WOULD BE SO RUTHLESS IN HIS STRATEGEMS...
...TO OVERTHROW MY REIGN OF WAKANDA. HE WOULD NOT DEBATE. HE WOULD SLAUGHTER!
AND NOW YOU TELL ME HE HAS GONE INTO THESE MYTHICAL MISTS... WITH KING CADAVER.
YOU'D BETTER BE AFRAID. IF YOU'VE LIED TO ME, I'LL UNLEASH MY RAGE FOR KILLMONGER UPON YOU!
MONICA LYNNE WATCHES HIM APPROACH. EBON ANGER DARKENS HIS AMBER EYES.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT COULD GO DOWN OUT THERE, DO YOU, T'CHALLA?
NO, MONICA. BUT I MUST MAKE THIS TREK.
BUT WHY ALONE? AT LEAST TAKE W'KABI WITH YOU.
W'KABI IS CHIEF OF COURT SECURITY. AND WITH ALL OUR PRISONERS AT THE PALACE THERE IS MUCH FOR HIM TO MAKE SECURE.
BESIDES, ULTIMATELY, THIS BATTLE IS BETWEEN KILLMONGER AND I, AND IF HE HAS GONE INTO THIS FORBIDDEN LAND ...THERE IS A REASON FOR IT. KILLMONGER DOES NOTHING THAT DOES NOT HAVE A PURPOSE!

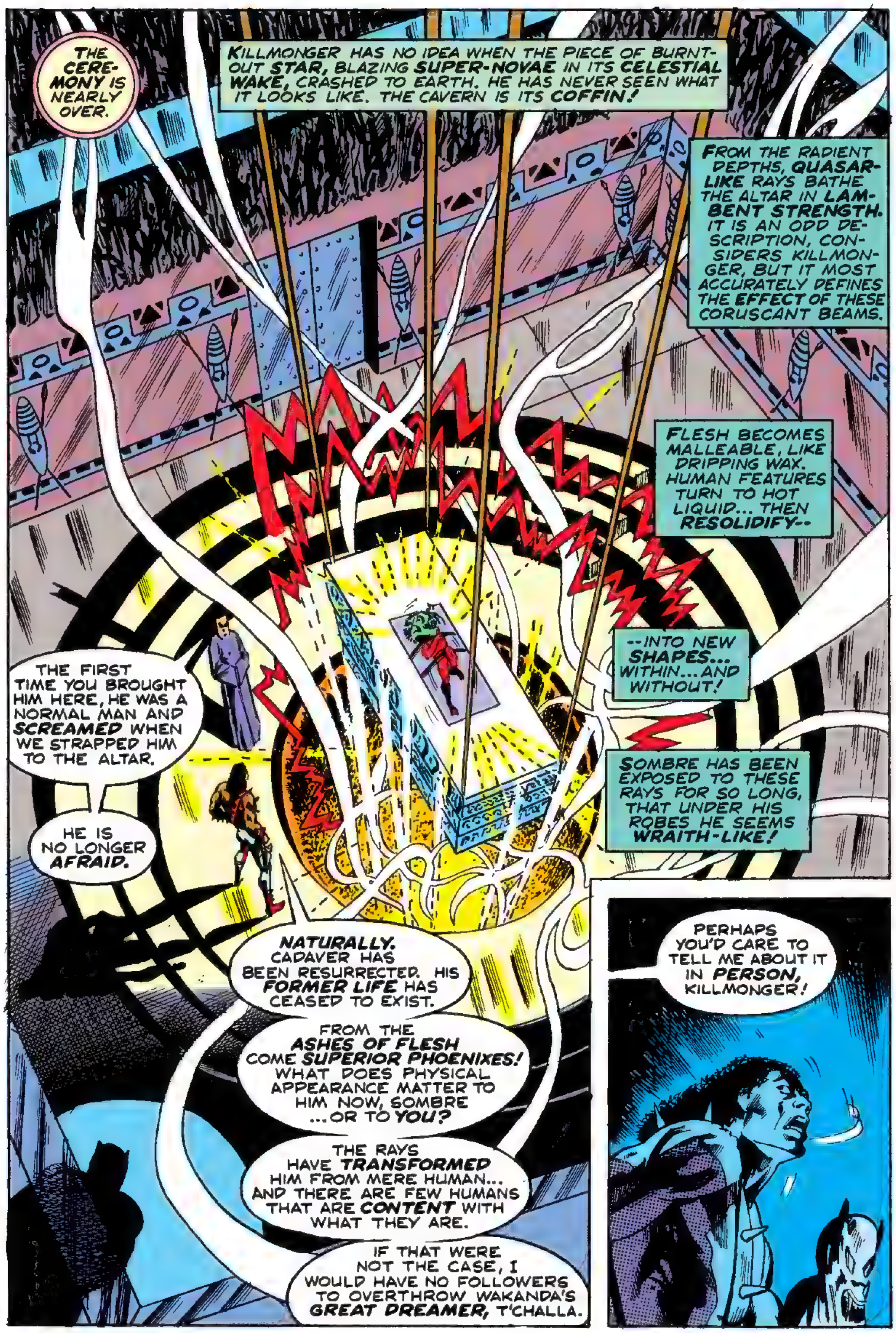

TAYETE, WHY IS HE TAKING OFF OUR CHAINS?
OBVIOUSLY, KAZIBE, IT'S BECAUSE... WHY ARE YOU FREEING US?
THE WORLD CHANGES IN AWESOME UPHEAVALS, AS IF TO REFLECT MY STATE OF MIND.
HOW DOES A LEADER TEACH HIS PEOPLE SUCH A THING AS A RESPECT FOR LIFE?
...AND HOW DOES HE KEEP THAT PRINCIPLE FIRM UNTO HIMSELF WHEN CALLOUS ATROCITIES TRANSPIRE AROUND HIM.
MANY OF YOUR PEOPLE HAVE THAT RESPECT. BUT THERE ARE NO SIMPLE ANSWERS.
T'CHALLA SAYS TO GIVE YOU THIS SPEAR. I DON'T AGREE WITH OUR CHIEFTAIN...
...BUT THEN I'VE BEEN WRONG ABOUT HIM BEFORE.
COMPASSION ISN'T ALWAYS AN INSTINCTIVE TRAIT IN THE HUMAN ANIMAL.
ME?
YOU.
YOU'RE RIGHT, AS USUAL. I HAVE SEEN TOO MANY OF THE DESTRUCTIVE BREED OF LATE--
--BUT YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME OF THE SELFLESS AND CREATIVE SIDES OF HUMANITY.
THEIR HANDS TOUCH BRIEFLY, AND THE PANTHER WISHES HE COULD STAY WITHIN THE SHELTERED SUCCOR OF HER WARMTH ...BUT SHE HAS GIVEN HIM THE STRENGTH TO TURN AND TREAD CAT-LIKE ONTO THE BECKONING BRIDGE.
HE GOES TO ANOTHER BATTLE, TAKU. THE LAST FIGHT SCARRED BOTH HE AND YOU.
THE SPIRIT CAN BE BROKEN AS EASILY AS BONES, MISS LYNNE--
--AND THE AGONY OF THAT SCAR CUTS TWICE AS DEEP--
--AND OFTEN TAKES TWICE AS LONG TO MEND.
YOU'VE GOT IT TOGETHER, TAKU. THERE AREN'T ANY SPLINTS FOR THE MIND.
AND SOMETIMES WE ARE NOT EVEN AWARE ANYTHING IS BROKEN.
COULD WE GO NOW, TAKU? SUDDENLY I'M COLD ...SO VERY COLD.


THE BRIDGE HAS SPANNED CENTURIES TO ITS UNKNOWN DESTINATION. ITS MAKER AND ORIGINAL PURPOSE ARE GENERATIONS FORGOTTEN--
--EXCEPT IN LEGENDS!
THE PANTHER FEELS THE SCARLET HAZE CONSUME THEM, THE CHILL TURNING STEADILY COLDER AS THE BRIDGE PROTESTS THEIR PASSING, SWAYING WITH TREACHEROUS REPRISAL!
THE WIND TEARS AT THEM, AND THE THREE OF THEM ARE BATHED IN THE CRUEL, PINK MIST--
--UNTIL, LIKE THE SUN, THEY ARE SLICED RAW BY IT--
--AS IF THE LEGENDS WERE AWARE THAT A MERE MORTAL DARED INVADE THEIR BOUNDARIES--
--AND THAT, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, HE DARED TO DO IT... ALONE!
PANTHER-DEVIL!
I... I WAS JU.. JUST WONDERING IF YOU WERE WARM ENOUGH.
MAKE IT QUICK, TAYETE. IF YOU ARE TRYING TO STALL FOR TIME YOU MIGHT HAVE NO TIME LEFT AT ALL!
THEIR BREATH FORMS INTO VAPOR, REMINDING THEM THAT IT IS THE CEASELESS PUMPING OF THEIR LUNGS WHICH KEEPS THEM ALIVE.
TAYETE IS CONVINCED. T'CHALLA IS NOT HUMAN. IT IS A DECEPTION THE PANTHER IS IN NO HURRY TO DISCREDIT.
AND THEN IT IS THERE BEFORE THEM. THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST! IT IS AS BLEAK AS HIS MEMORIES OF THE RAID ON KILLMONGER'S COMMAND VILLAGE
THE TWO BLEAKNESSES, SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL, COMBINE. AND HE STANDS, DWARFED BY THE IMMENSITY OF HIS SURROUNDINGS...
...ASSAULTED BY THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS TASK. AND HE WONDERS, DARKLY, IF ANY ACTION HE TAKES WILL RETURN WAKANDA TO TRANQUILITY... OR IF ANY PATH HE TAKES WILL END IN INSIGNIFICANCE!


THE CHILL FACTOR IS RISING TOWARDS 50 DEGREES BELOW ZERO. ERIK KILLMONGER DOES NOT SEEM TO NOTICE, NOR DOES THE ANKLE DEEP SNOW SLOW HIS ARROGANT STRIDE!
THEY ARE NEARING THE ALTAR OF RESSURECTION, AND HE IS ANXIOUS FOR THE RITUALS TO BEGIN. SOMBRE WILL BE WAITING... FOR HE IS THE ORACLE OF THE RESSURECTION ALTAR!
I NO LONGER FEAR THIS PLACE. THE FIRST TIME WE CROSSED THAT BRIDGE, I COULD NOT STOP SWEATING. THE COLD NUMBED ME, BUT I COULD NOT STOP SWEATING.
YOU WERE NOT THE SAME BEING THEN.
HEEL, PREYY! STAY WITH ME!
YOU LIVED IN IGNORANCE BACK THEN, KING CADAVER. AND THE TITLE OF "KING OF ANYTHING" WAS NOT IN YOUR FUTURE IN THOSE DAYS.
BUT IT IS NOW!
NOW YOU ARE KING CADAVER... JUST AS I AM NO LONGER N'JADAKA, BUT ERIK KILLMONGER. I LIKE THE INSOLENCE OF THE NAME ERIK... BUT YOU CANNOT APPRECIATE THAT SINCE YOU HAVE NEVER LIVED IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION.
AND THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE YOUR TRANSFORMATION BEGAN. MORTAL CONCERNS ARE PAST YOU, YOUR MENTAL PROWESS HAS BEEN INCREASED TEN-FOLD... MEN WHO WERE ONCE YOUR EQUAL ARE NOW SUBJECT TO YOUR MARAUDING THEIR MINDS--
--THOUGH HOW THAT IDEALISTIC CHILD, T'CHALLA, MANAGED TO KEEP YOU FROM PLUNDERING HIS TENDER LITTLE PSYCHE IS A PUZZLEMENT.
HE IS RESOURCEFUL. DON'T YOU CONTEMPLATE T'CHALLA'S MOVEMENTS WHILE YOU ARE AWAY FROM WAKANDA?
"NEVER!"

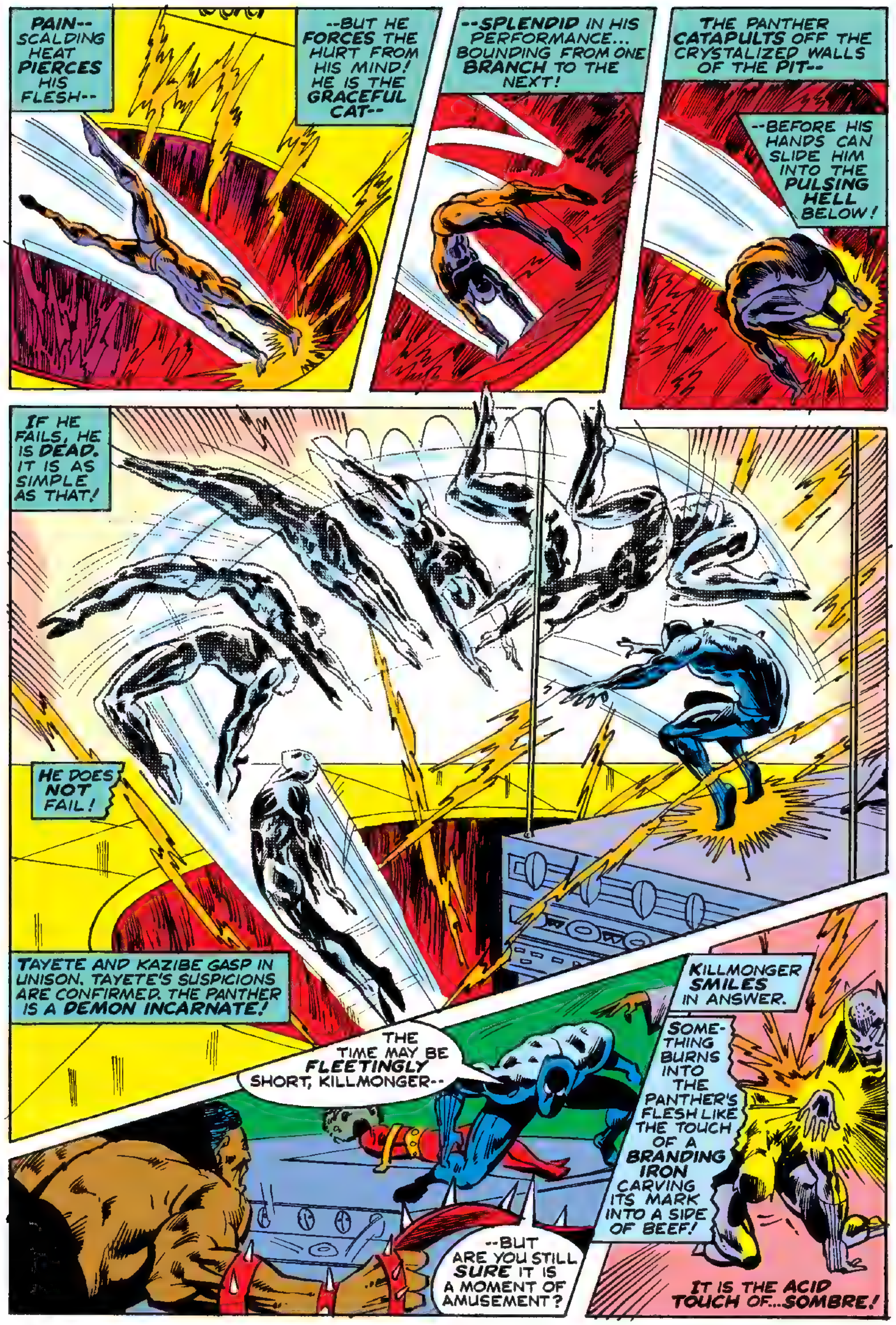

THE ENTRANCE IS CHISELLED IN IRIDESCENT ICE, THAT SHIFTS COLORS... AN ELEMENTAL KALEIDOSCOPE, FRAGMENTING DESIGNS IN SHADES OF DEPTHLESS WHITES AND BURNING AMETHYST.
THE CAVERN HAS THE ATMOSPHERE OF A MONASTERY ...SACRED, ECHOING SILENCE OFF ITS ROCK-HEWN CEILINGS. AN UNNATURAL HEAT PULSES RHYTHMICALLY, CLASHING WITH THE GLACIAL AIR BEYOND ITS PORTAL.
SOMBRE APPEARS FROM THE FUMES, ALMOST AS IF HE IS A PART OF THEM... AND HIS PLACID WELCOME IS COUNTERED BY SOULLESS EYES, GLEAMING BEHIND A MASK THAT HAS BEEN WELDED TO FLESH!
WELCOME, ERIK. I TRUST YOU HAD A SAFE JOURNEY?
AH, I SEE THE GOOD KING IS WITH YOU.
YES. AND HE SPEAKS OF RESOURCES, SOMBRE. AND I WAS ABOUT TO TELL HIM, RESOURCES COME FROM THE LAND...
...AND THIS LAND IS NOT T'CHALLA'S ANYMORE. IT IS MINE!
IT IS LATE AFTERNOON WHEN THEY COME UPON THE RIVER, FLOWING LETHARGICALLY TOWARD UNEXPLORED REALMS. TAYETE COMES TO A HALT, AND A SMUG SNEER OF FALSE BRAVADO CLAIMS HIS FACE.
"WE CAN'T CROSS THAT," HE SAYS, CONFIDENTLY.
T'CHALLA SMILES, BUT ITS MIRTH IS COVERED BY HIS MASK. "GOOD OLD TAYETE," HE THINKS, ALMOST WITH AFFECTION.
"AND WHY NOT, TAYETE? IN FACT, WE'LL LET YOU LEAD US ACROSS!" HIS VOICE IS AS HARD AS THE ICE FLOW.
HE WAITS FOR TAYETE'S REACTION, THEN BENDS, AND, MUSCLES STRAINING--
--RIPS A HUGE SHARD OF GLACIER FROM ITS ICE MONUMENT.
TAYETE DOUBLE TAKES, AND THE PANTHER CAN BARELY STIFLE A LAUGH. IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME HE HAS LAUGHED... IN MONTHS.
"AND ONE OTHER THING, TAYETE!"
"YES, PANTHER-DEVIL."
STOP CALLING ME PANTHER-DEVIL!

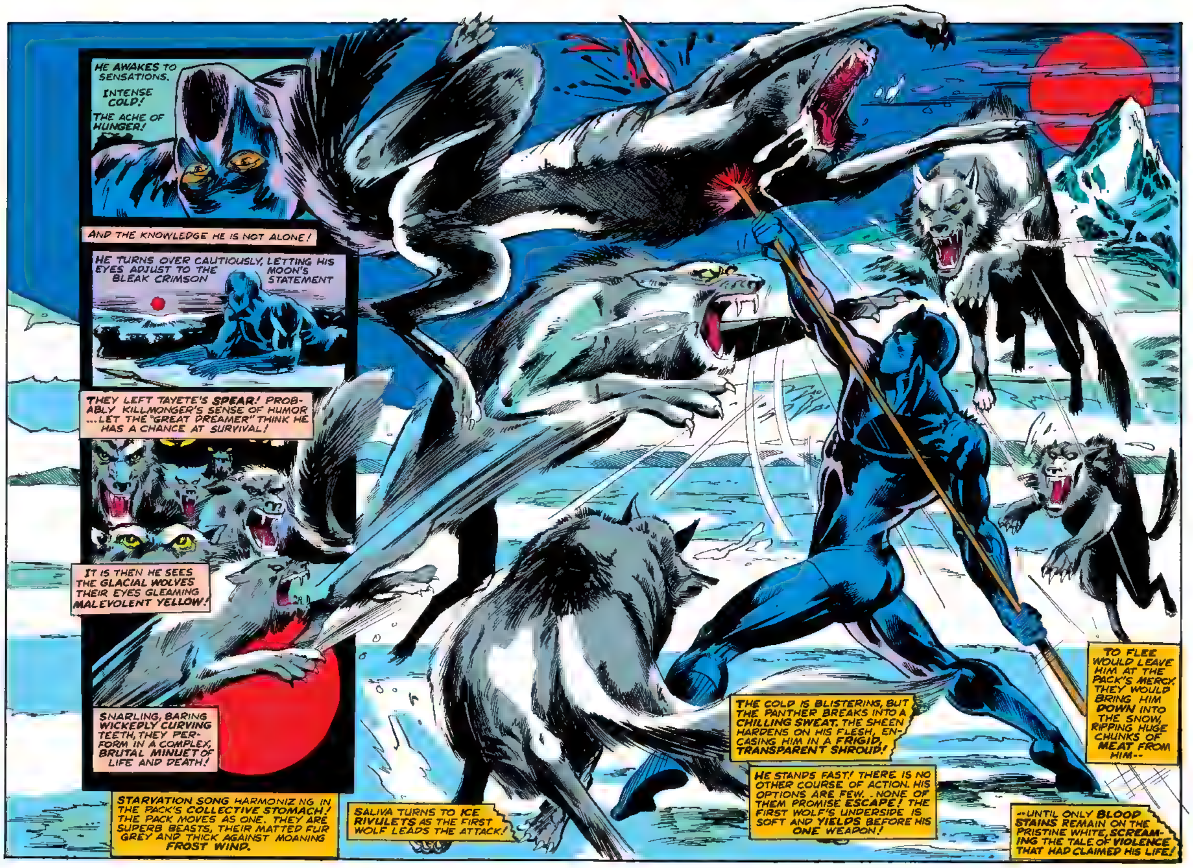

NOW COME FORWARD, TAYETE. IF ANY MORE TIME IS WASTED, I'LL HELP YOU ACROSS.
HE'S NOT SERIOUS, IS HE, KAZIBE? PANTHER-DE... I MEAN, YOU AREN'T SERIOUS ABOUT...
TAYETE, PLEASE, DON'T ANGER HIM!
NOW?
RIGHT NOW!
THE FROST CURRENT SURGES PAST ICEBERGS... AND THEY ARE LIKE FROZEN DREAMS TURNED TO BITTER ILLUSIONS!
CAREFUL, TAYETE. ONE SLIP AND DEATH IS AS SWIFT AS THE RIVER'S FLOW!
BUT IT IS NOT SLIPPING TAYETE HAS TO WORRY ABOUT. THE ICE, LIKE THE PANTHER'S DREAMS, SHATTERS!
THE PANTHER HAS NOT LIED! THE TOUCH OF THAT LIQUID IS DEATH!
THE PANTHER TENSES FOR THE LEAP, AND THEN SPRINGS... TENSION UNLEASHED... EYES JUDGING THE DISTANCE TO THE OPPOSITE SHORE!
THE SHEER MOMENTUM OF HIS LEAP CARRIES BOTH OF THEM TO SAFETY.
YOUR LUCK HAS NOT YET RUN OUT, TAYETE.
EVEN IF YOU'D MANAGED TO SWIM ASHORE, THE MOST RAGING FIRE COULD NOT STOP THE ONSLAUGHT OF FROSTBITE!
NIGHT COMES. AND THE WIND-CHILL FACTOR WILL REACH MORE THAN 100 DEGREES BELOW ZERO. THEN, ANY HEAVY BREATHING WILL TURN THE TISSUE OF YOUR LUNGS TO ICE!
NOW WHERE WOULD KILLMONGER HEAD?
UP THERE... RESSURECTION ALTAR WAITS.
AND AGAIN, THE ENORMITY OF THIS LAND AND HIS TASK ENGULF HIM ...AND HE WISHES IT WERE DONE ...ONE WAY ...OR THE OTHER!

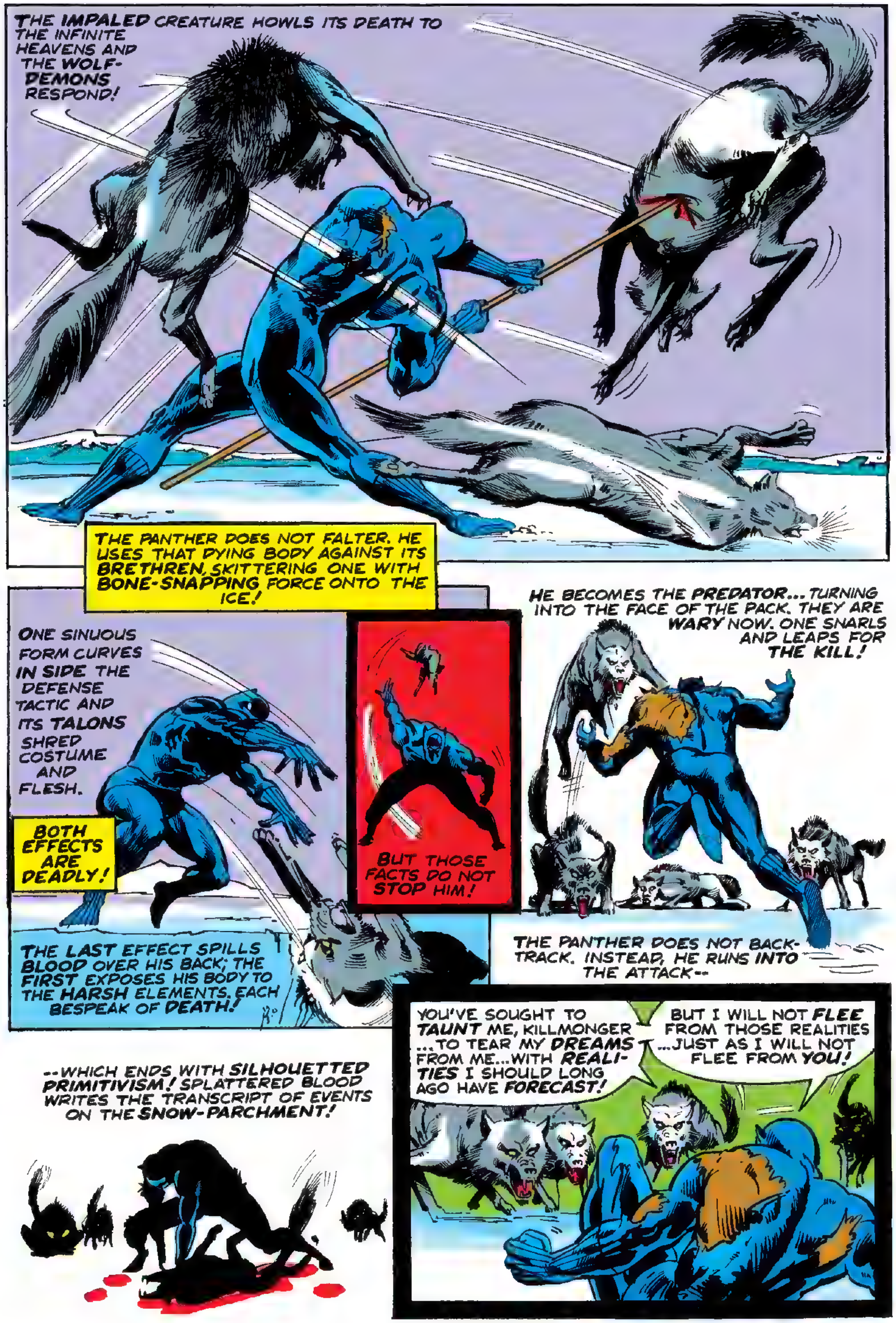

THE CEREMONY IS NEARLY OVER.
KILLMONGER HAS NO IDEA WHEN THE PIECE OF BURNT-OUT STAR, BLAZING SUPER-NOVAE IN ITS CELESTIAL WAKE, CRASHED TO EARTH. HE HAS NEVER SEEN WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. THE CAVERN IS ITS COFFIN!
FROM THE RADIENT DEPTHS, QUASAR-LIKE RAYS BATHE THE ALTAR IN LAMBENT STRENGTH. IT IS AN ODD DESCRIPTION, CONSIDERS KILLMONGER, BUT IT MOST ACCURATELY DEFINES THE EFFECT OF THESE CORUSCANT BEAMS.
FLESH BECOMES MALLEABLE, LIKE DRIPPING WAX. HUMAN FEATURES TURN TO HOT LIQUID... THEN RESOLIDIFY--
--INTO NEW SHAPES... WITHIN... AND WITHOUT!
SOMBRE HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO THESE RAYS FOR SO LONG, THAT UNDER HIS ROBES HE SEEMS WRAITH-LIKE!
THE FIRST TIME YOU BROUGHT HIM HERE, HE WAS A NORMAL MAN AND SCREAMED WHEN WE STRAPPED HIM TO THE ALTAR.
HE IS NO LONGER AFRAID.
NATURALLY. CADAVER HAS BEEN RESURRECTED. HIS FORMER LIFE HAS CEASED TO EXIST.
FROM THE ASHES OF FLESH COME SUPERIOR PHOENIXES! WHAT DOES PHYSICAL APPEARANCE MATTER TO HIM NOW, SOMBRE ...OR TO YOU?
THE RAYS HAVE TRANSFORMED HIM FROM MERE HUMAN... AND THERE ARE FEW HUMANS THAT ARE CONTENT WITH WHAT THEY ARE.
IF THAT WERE NOT THE CASE, I WOULD HAVE NO FOLLOWERS TO OVERTHROW WAKANDA'S GREAT DREAMER, T'CHALLA.
PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO TELL ME ABOUT IT IN PERSON, KILLMONGER!

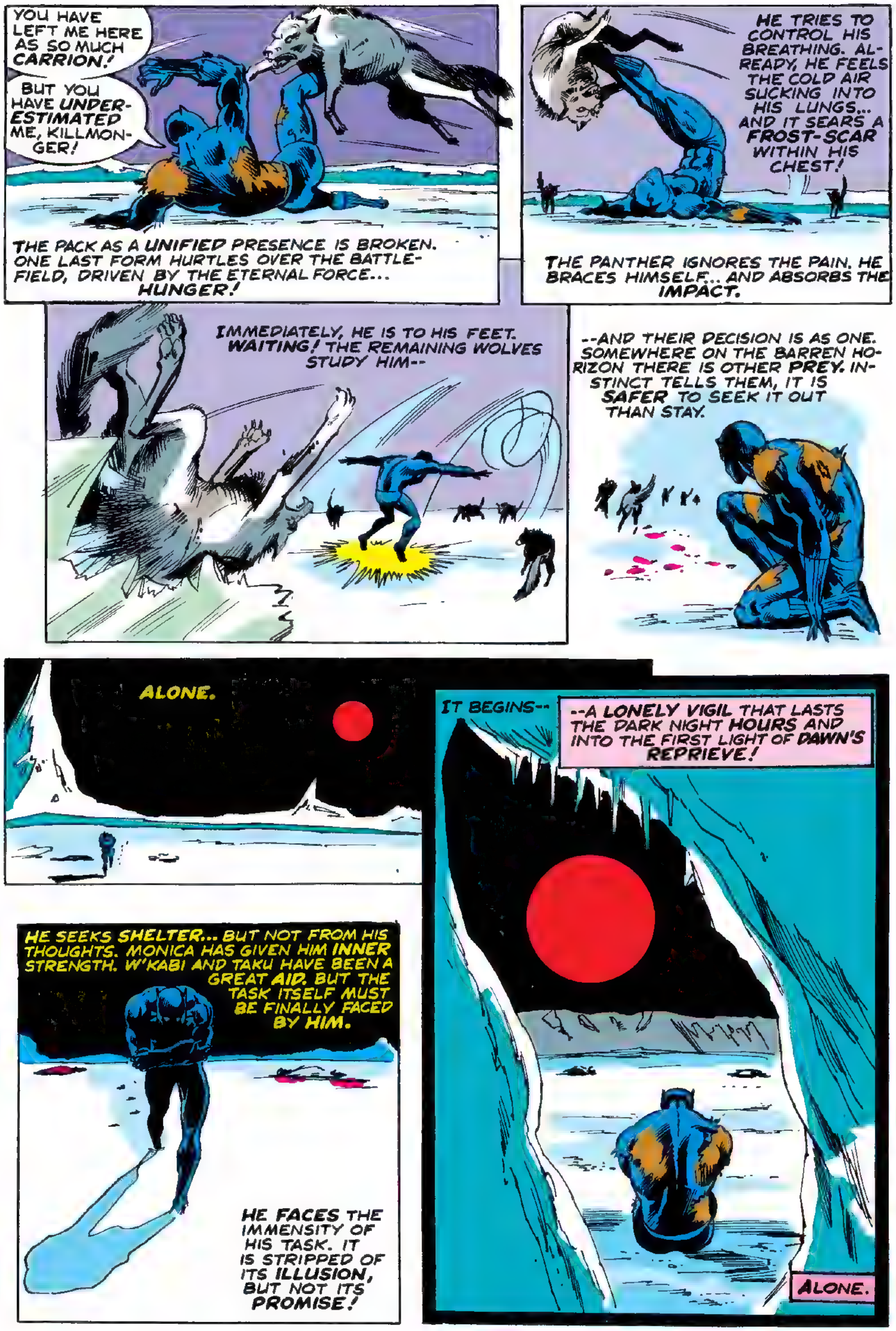
OR IS BACKSTABBING MORE YOUR STYLE?
KAZIBE, DON'T HE KNOW? YOU JUST DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT TO KILLMONGER.
KILLMONGER TURNS ABOUT, NONCHALANTLY... AS IF THE PANTHER'S ARRIVAL WERE A WEARISOME, BUT EXPECTED NUISANCE!
HEARTBEATS MEASURE SECONDS OF SILENT CONFLICT!
AND THEN, THEY BOTH MOVE TO ATTACK!
IT HAS BEEN NEAR THREE MONTHS OF BLOODSHED SINCE THESE TWO ADVERSARIES HAVE FACED EACH OTHER--
--THREE MONTHS THAT BECOMES THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ONE OF THOSE HEARTBEATS, AS IF THIS NEW FIGHT IS AN EXTENSION OF THE FIRST!
THIS MOMENT HAS BEEN LONG AWAITED, KILLMONGER!
YOU WAITED FOR SO SHORT A MOMENT?
A MOMENT OF AMUSEMENT, NO LESS.
TO THE PANTHER'S ASTONISHMENT, KILLMONGER'S FACE DOES NOT EXPRESS DEFEAT--
--RATHER, HE IS OVERWHELMED BY HIS FOE'S SUPERIORITY! HE IS KILLMONGER'S TAYETE!!
HE IS A CHILD ONCE MORE, HAND WRESTLING WITH HIS FATHER...AND THOUGH HE CAN BARELY WAGE A CONTEST, HIS FATHER LETS HIM WIN!
THOSE DAYS ARE GONE! LIKE HIS DREAMS!
YOU SEE T'CHALLA, YOU ARE NO MORE THAN A MOMENTARY DIVERSION!
EFFORTLESSLY, KILLMONGER HURTLES HIM OVER THE EDGE OF THE PIT... AND TOWARDS INCINERATION!!

CHILDHOOD'S DEATH! KANTU'S CHILDHOOD IS BEHIND HIM THOUGH HE IS BUT NINE YEARS OLD. HIS FATHER IS DEAD! THE GRASSY SAVANNA IS WARM, BUT THE SUN NEVER PENETRATES KANTU'S FLESH.
THE KRAAL HAVE BEEN RESTLESS. ONCE, HE WOULD HAVE STALKED THEM. BUT GAMES SEEM A PART OF HIS PAST. HE HAS NO HEART FOR THEM.
KANTU! ONE OF THE HERD IS LOOSE!
I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE SOME HELP.
WHAT HELP COULD YOU GIVE ME? DO YOU COME TO TAKE ME BACK TO THAT HOS-PE-TAAL? I TRUST YOU NO MORE THAN I DO ALL THOSE INDOOR SUNS.
ONCE I TRUSTED OUR HERBALIST, MENDINAO ...BUT NOW HE STAYS WITH THESE MEN CALLED DOCK-TORS. DO YOU KNOW OF DOCK-TORS?
I'VE HAD SOME RUN-INS WITH 'EM. MENDINAO LAID SOME HEAVY RAP ON ME, THAT YOU MIGHT NEED HELP...
WHAT WITH THE FARM HERE... AND YOUR SON.
OUT-WORLDER, KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY SON!
MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM ME, I'LL NOT HAVE MY SON TAKEN ALSO.
CAN'T YOU LEAVE A WOMAN TO MOURN WITH DIGNITY?
I CANNOT STEAL YOUR DIGNITY... NOR THE DEPTH AND HONESTY OF YOUR SORROW... FOR IF I COULD, IT WOULD BE BUT SHALLOW GRIEF... AND IT WOULD BE HONEST IN WORDS ONLY.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU, OUT-WORLDER.
I KNOW.
BUT WE BOTH UNDERSTAND HURT AND SORROW.
PER-HAPS WE CAN HELP EASE EACH OTHER'S PAIN!


PAIN-- SCALDING HEAT PIERCES HIS FLESH--
--BUT HE FORCES THE HURT FROM HIS MIND! HE IS THE GRACEFUL CAT--
--SPLENDID IN HIS PERFORMANCE... BOUNDING FROM ONE BRANCH TO THE NEXT!
THE PANTHER CATAPULTS OFF THE CRYSTALIZED WALLS OF THE PIT--
--BEFORE HIS HANDS CAN SLIDE HIM INTO THE PULSING HELL BELOW!
IF HE FAILS, HE IS DEAD. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT!
HE DOES NOT FAIL!
TAYETE AND KAZIBE GASP IN UNISON. TAYETE'S SUSPICIONS ARE CONFIRMED. THE PANTHER IS A DEMON INCARNATE!
THE TIME MAY BE FLEETINGLY SHORT, KILLMONGER--
--BUT ARE YOU STILL SURE IT IS A MOMENT OF AMUSEMENT?
KILLMONGER SMILES IN ANSWER.
SOMETHING BURNS INTO THE PANTHER'S FLESH LIKE THE TOUCH OF A BRANDING IRON CARVING ITS MARK INTO A SIDE OF BEEF!
IT IS THE ACID TOUCH OF...SOMBRE!

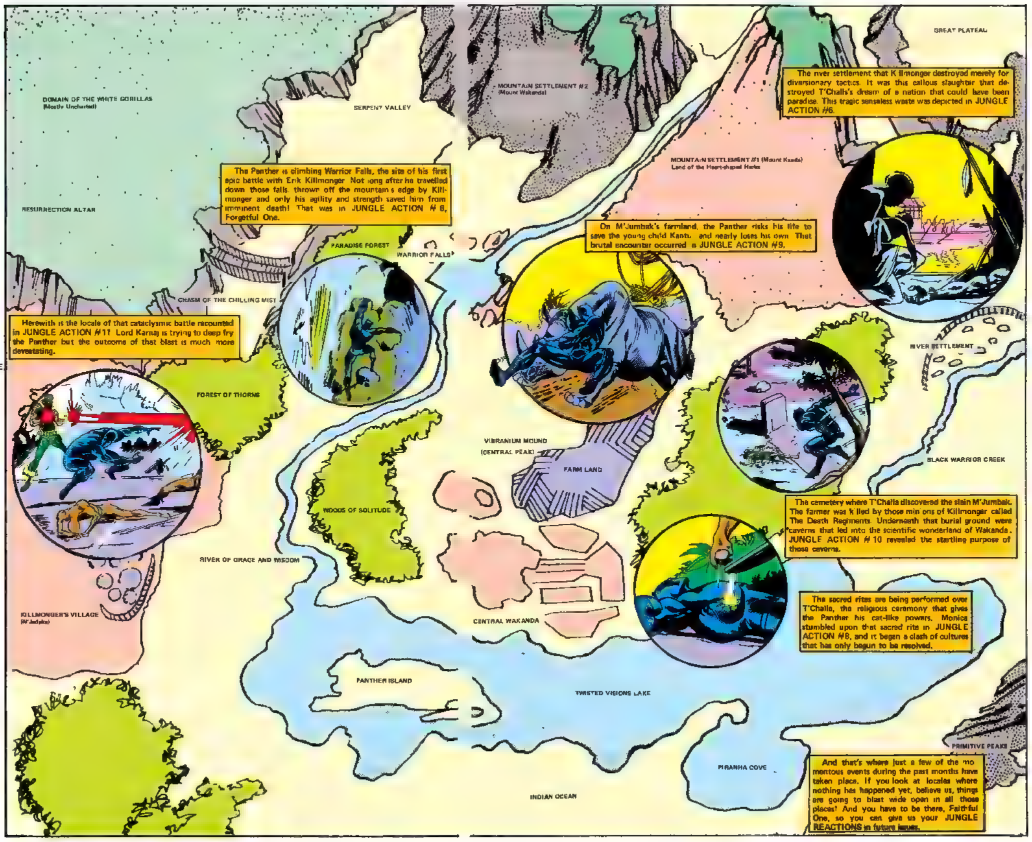

HE AWAKES TO SENSATIONS.
INTENSE COLD!
THE ACHE OF HUNGER!
AND THE KNOWLEDGE HE IS NOT ALONE!
HE TURNS OVER CAUTIOUSLY, LETTING HIS EYES ADJUST TO THE BLEAK CRIMSON MOON'S STATEMENT
THEY LEFT TAYETE'S SPEAR! PROBABLY KILLMONGER'S SENSE OF HUMOR ...LET THE "GREAT DREAMER" THINK HE HAS A CHANCE AT SURVIVAL!
IT IS THEN HE SEES THE GLACIAL WOLVES THEIR EYES GLEAMING MALEVOLENT YELLOW!
SNARLING, BARING WICKEDLY CURVING TEETH, THEY PERFORM IN A COMPLEX, BRUTAL MINUET OF LIFE AND DEATH!
STARVATION SONG HARMONIZ NG IN THE PACK'S COLLECTIVE STOMACH! THE PACK MOVES AS ONE. THEY ARE SUPERB BEASTS, THEIR MATTED FUR GREY AND THICK AGAINST MOANING FROST WIND.
SALIVA TURNS TO ICE RIVULETS AS THE FIRST WOLF LEADS THE ATTACK!
THE COLD IS BLISTERING, BUT THE PANTHER BREAKS INTO A CHILLING SWEAT. THE SHEEN HARDENS ON HIS FLESH, ENCASING HIM IN A FRIGID, TRANSPARENT SHROUD!
HE STANDS FAST! THERE IS NO OTHER COURSE OF ACTION. HIS OPTIONS ARE FEW. . NONE OF THEM PROMISE ESCAPE! THE FIRST WOLF'S UNDERSIDE IS SOFT AND YIELDS BEFORE HIS ONE WEAPON!
TO FLEE WOULD LEAVE HIM AT THE PACK'S MERCY. THEY WOULD BRING HIM DOWN INTO THE SNOW, RIPPING HUGE CHUNKS OF MEAT FROM HIM--
--UNTIL ONLY BLOOD STAINS REMAIN ON THE PRISTINE WHITE, SCREAMING THE TALE OF VIOLENCE THAT HAD CLAIMED HIS LIFE!


THE IMPALED CREATURE HOWLS ITS DEATH TO THE INFINITE HEAVENS AND THE WOLF-DEMONS RESPOND!
THE PANTHER DOES NOT FALTER. HE USES THAT DYING BODY AGAINST ITS BRETHREN, SKITTERING ONE WITH BONE-SNAPPING FORCE ONTO THE ICE!
ONE SINUOUS FORM CURVES IN SIDE THE DEFENSE TACTIC AND ITS TALONS SHRED COSTUME AND FLESH.
BOTH EFFECTS ARE DEADLY!
THE LAST EFFECT SPILLS BLOOD OVER HIS BACK; THE FIRST EXPOSES HIS BODY TO THE HARSH ELEMENTS. EACH BESPEAK OF DEATH!
BUT THOSE FACTS DO NOT STOP HIM!
HE BECOMES THE PREDATOR... TURNING INTO THE FACE OF THE PACK. THEY ARE WARY NOW. ONE SNARLS AND LEAPS FOR THE KILL!
THE PANTHER DOES NOT BACK-TRACK. INSTEAD, HE RUNS INTO THE ATTACK--
--WHICH ENDS WITH SILHOUETTED PRIMITIVISM! SPLATTERED BLOOD WRITES THE TRANSCRIPT OF EVENTS ON THE SNOW-PARCHMENT!
YOU'VE SOUGHT TO TAUNT ME, KILLMONGER ...TO TEAR MY DREAMS FROM ME...WITH REALI-TIES I SHOULD LONG AGO HAVE FORECAST!
BUT I WILL NOT FLEE FROM THOSE REALITIES ...JUST AS I WILL NOT FLEE FROM YOU!


YOU HAVE LEFT ME HERE AS SO MUCH CARRION!
BUT YOU HAVE UNDER-ESTIMATED ME, KILLMON-GER!
THE PACK AS A UNIFIED PRESENCE IS BROKEN. ONE LAST FORM HURTLES OVER THE BATTLE-FIELD, DRIVEN BY THE ETERNAL FORCE... HUNGER!
HE TRIES TO CONTROL HIS BREATHING. AL-READY, HE FEELS THE COLD AIR SUCKING INTO HIS LUNGS... AND IT SEARS A FROST-SCAR WITHIN HIS CHEST!
THE PANTHER IGNORES THE PAIN. HE BRACES HIMSELF... AND ABSORBS THE IMPACT.
IMMEDIATELY, HE IS TO HIS FEET. WAITING! THE REMAINING WOLVES STUDY HIM--
--AND THEIR DECISION IS AS ONE. SOMEWHERE ON THE BARREN HO-RIZON THERE IS OTHER PREY. IN-STINCT TELLS THEM, IT IS SAFER TO SEEK IT OUT THAN STAY.
ALONE.
IT BEGINS--
--A LONELY VIGIL THAT LASTS THE DARK NIGHT HOURS AND INTO THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN'S REPRIEVE!
ALONE.
HE SEEKS SHELTER... BUT NOT FROM HIS THOUGHTS. MONICA HAS GIVEN HIM INNER STRENGTH. W'KABI AND TAKU HAVE BEEN A GREAT AID. BUT THE TASK ITSELF MUST BE FINALLY FACED BY HIM.
HE FACES THE IMMENSITY OF HIS TASK. IT IS STRIPPED OF ITS ILLUSION, BUT NOT ITS PROMISE!

THE HIDDEN LAND OF WAKANDA!

A SPECIAL RETROSPECTIVE DETAILING WHERE IN WAKANDA "PANTHER'S RAGE" HAS TAKEN PLACE.



JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

Dear Don, Billy, Klaus, Glynis, Dave and Crew,

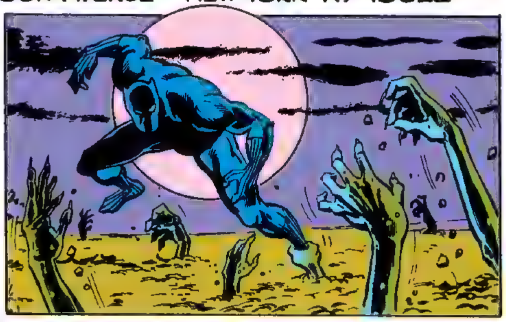
The Black Panther series in JUNGLE ACTION is one of the most exciting (visually and narratively) and contemplative books ever to come from Marvel. It is one of those special treats a fan hopes for and gets only sometimes. Don McGregor is without a doubt one of your most researched writers and his scripts show it by having that complete feeling to them.

Rich Buckler has been replaced by Billy Graham. And boy is he *replaced!* Billy turned out an artistic triumph. Every page was pure dynamite! The lay-outs were by far the most visually exciting aspect of the art. However, they look like Don might have had a hand in it. Did they work together on them?

It's great to see blacks drawn realistically for a change. There are few comic artists who can do this: Neal Adams is one, Buckler another, and, probably tops, is Billy Graham.

While I'm on the art end of the book I cannot overlook Klaus Janson's inks. He has quickly gone into my category of top inkers, those whose styles are just so magnificent that they enhance anyone's work. Both Billy and Klaus are enhanced by Glynis Wein's beautifully meshed colors. They were superb.

If I may, I'd like to return to Don McGregor. He has so *totally* conceived his plots and characters that the stories become very tightly knit. I hate to sound repetitive, but it's hard to describe my love for his work. The emnity of the Wakandans toward T'Challa is well done. His struggle to reaffirm his leadership is nicely developed. He's trying to



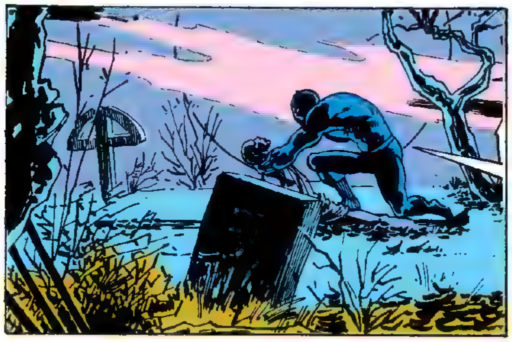
mix the best of both worlds and at the same time show his people that he is one with them.

The crocodile fight at the beginning of "King Cadaver Is Dead and Living in Wakanda" was some task to undertake. Between Tarzan, Ka-Zar and the rest of the jungle heroes that type of battle must have taken place a million times. But here, the narration made it fresh and (believe it or not) interesting. The scene *worked!*

I see that I got carried away with the length of this letter and I apologize. There was much to be said and I hope we both benefited from it. I know I have.

DEAN MULLANEY
81 Delaware Street
Staten Island, N.Y. 10304

No apologies needed, Dean, especially to Don, Billy, Klaus, and Glynis. There has been a team spirit about this book that has helped unify the Panther series into a collective whole. In fact, we probably owe *you* an apology since we had to delete several paragraphs of your letter, but believe us, you weren't the only one that benefited from your missive. We greatly appreciate it.



Dear Roy and Stan and all the folks at Marvel (Hi, Don),

For several reasons, I feel compelled to write and comment on your incredible JUNGLE ACTION magazine. The Panther's exploits as chronicled in JUNGLE ACTION have been consistently excellent...an outstanding achievement!

However, in issue #10, "King Cadaver is Dead and Living in Wakanda!", both the writing and the art reached unparalleled heights. Don's writing just gets better and better (until I think he's incapable of writing anything that is merely ordinary) and Billy Graham's artwork in this issue is the best that Billy has ever done. Please keep him on the Panther. Billy's vividly dramatic artwork beautifully complements Don's lyrical style of writing.

But praise alone was not my only motivation for writing.

To be blunt, I fear for the future of T'Challa in his own mag. Past experience has shown that truly superior creations do not survive long without some sort of catastrophe happening. Sometimes, the mag is suddenly forced to go bi-monthly. At other times, the artists are changed with every other issue. The final disaster is that the publication is discontinued because the plot attempted to achieve some depth within its limited page count.

I hope none of these nasties will happen to the Panther (my personal favorite), especially now that the stunning writer/artist combination of Don McGregor and Billy Graham has come to light.

In every story, Don manages to integrate all the elements of an excellent story. The interpersonal relationships and character developments reach a sensitivity that is rare in today's comics, yet they do not overpower the action scenes, which are extraordinarily vivid.

There is even a touch of comedy.

The "Panther's Rage" is an emotional experience, like any great work of art.

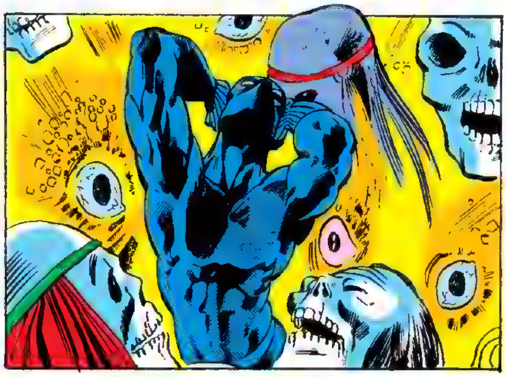
One final comment: Wakanda must survive! It is encouraging to know that it has withstood the onslaught of white hunters, jungle girls, and Tarzan-types, and has remained a settlement of BLACK people in the African jungle. Any changes in its demographic structure would sorely injure the credibility of the story line.

Shalom.

MELONEY M. H. CRAWFORD
16 Caroline St., Apt#5
Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866

Don says he loves you, Meloney.

As for the fates you list that can happen to the Panther, one of them can't possibly happen. We can't be reduced to bi-monthly status since we already are on a bi-monthly schedule. If monthly publication does occur, the effects would probably be catastrophic. Our production chief John Verpoorten, who is in charge of getting all these Marvel mags out to the printer, feels he has enough difficulty getting Don to meet a bi-monthly deadline.



As to the effects it would have on Don, well, we've seen him wandering the halls of 575 Madison Avenue late at night, trance-like, eyes blazing amber, screaming to the walls, "Deadlines! Deadlines!"

We've been thinking of giving him one of those Taku philosophy dolls that quotes the secret of inner peace and tranquility. They only cost $1.75, which is cheap in these days of inflation. We understand that there is a $2.59 Taku philosophy doll that tells you how to become one with the universe, but that isn't so rare a secret these days, so we don't know where they get off charging the extra bread for that model.

On the serious side, the Panther seems to be in no immediate trouble, although the comic biz is somewhat like the stock-market so one can never be too sure, and we're more than glad you like the lyrical approach used in detailing T'Challa's adventures.

Don would like to take a moment out to thank Jim Salicrup for coming through on last issue's back-up feature. Don had designed the concept for revealing Zatama's murderer just before he went to Hawaii for a brief (too brief) vacation, and Jim came through with added embellishments to the layout. Thanks, Jim, else we finally would have had to use that story about Lorna and her pet mongoose.

Dear Black Panther,

What planet do you come from? And why are you black with no nose or mouth?

P.S. You are neat-oh!

R.M.
7540 Eighteenth Avenue
Kenosha, Wisconsin

The Panther comes from the same planet you do, Mr. M. He was born black some years ago (and though he's never shouted the slogan "and proud of it!" his actions clearly indicate that he is). When the Panther lifts up that devilish cowl of his, you'll notice he has eyes and nose just as you and I. He might even have a sinus condition for Pete's sake. Fortunately, he's not allergic to those little heart shaped herbs that give him his Panther powers.

Sheesh, would that be a revolting development.

P.S. We think you're neat-oh, too.

NEXT ISSUE: "THE GOD KILLER!" Remember last ish when we told you, in a box very similar to this one, that the Panther would meet up with the fabled white gorillas? *Remember?* Oh, you'd forgotten. It's too bad we brought it up then. Obviously, that didn't quite happen this ish, but it does next time around, and we think the meeting will be worth the wait. If you've been wondering anything about the enigmatic Sombre, the Oracle of Resurrection, Altar, he'll be back, also. And we've got some surprising developments in store for you with our supporting cast of characters...especially W'Kabi!

You're not gonna want to miss this one, Effendi.

Until then...hang in there!

THIS IS IT! YOUR

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE! CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM!

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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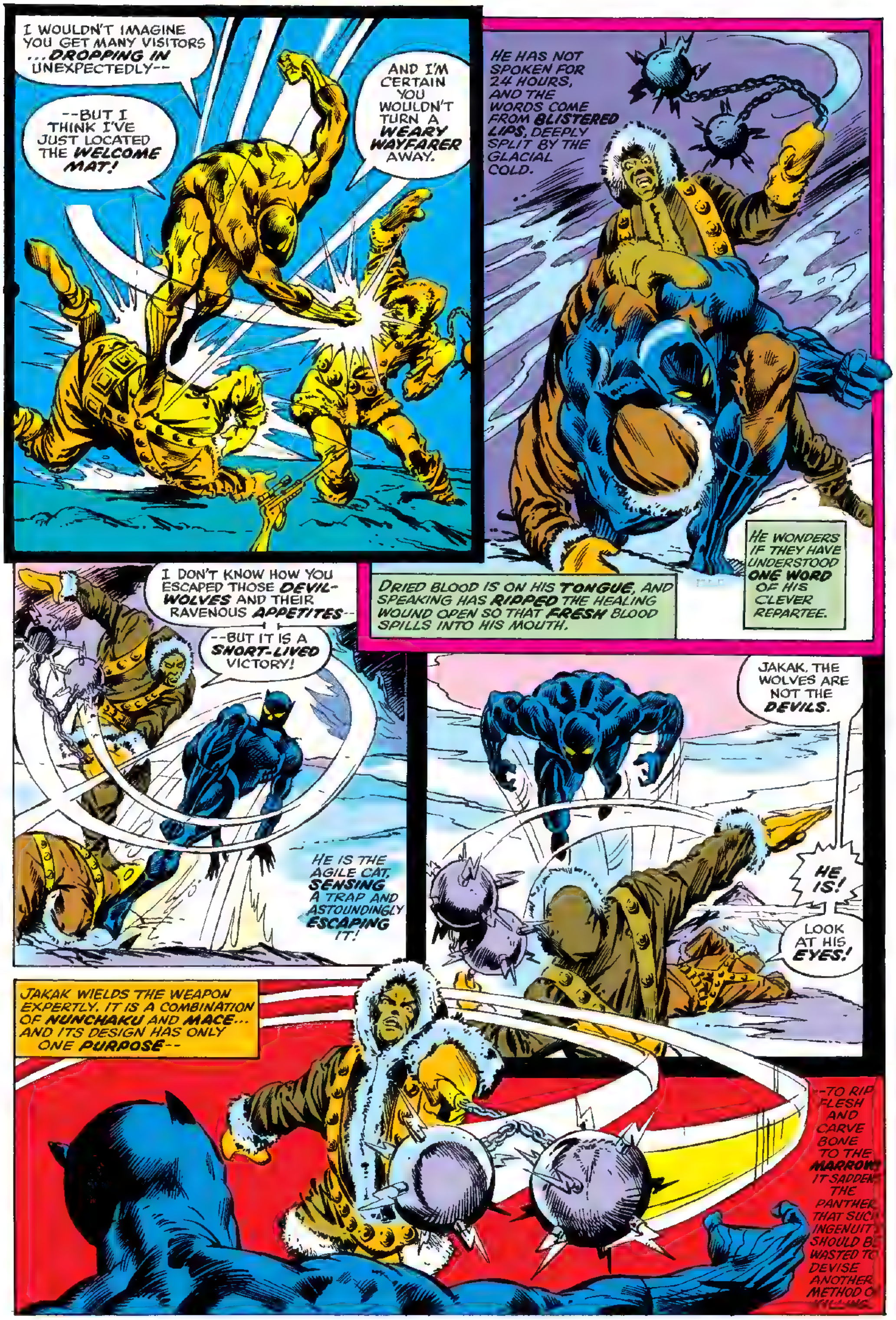
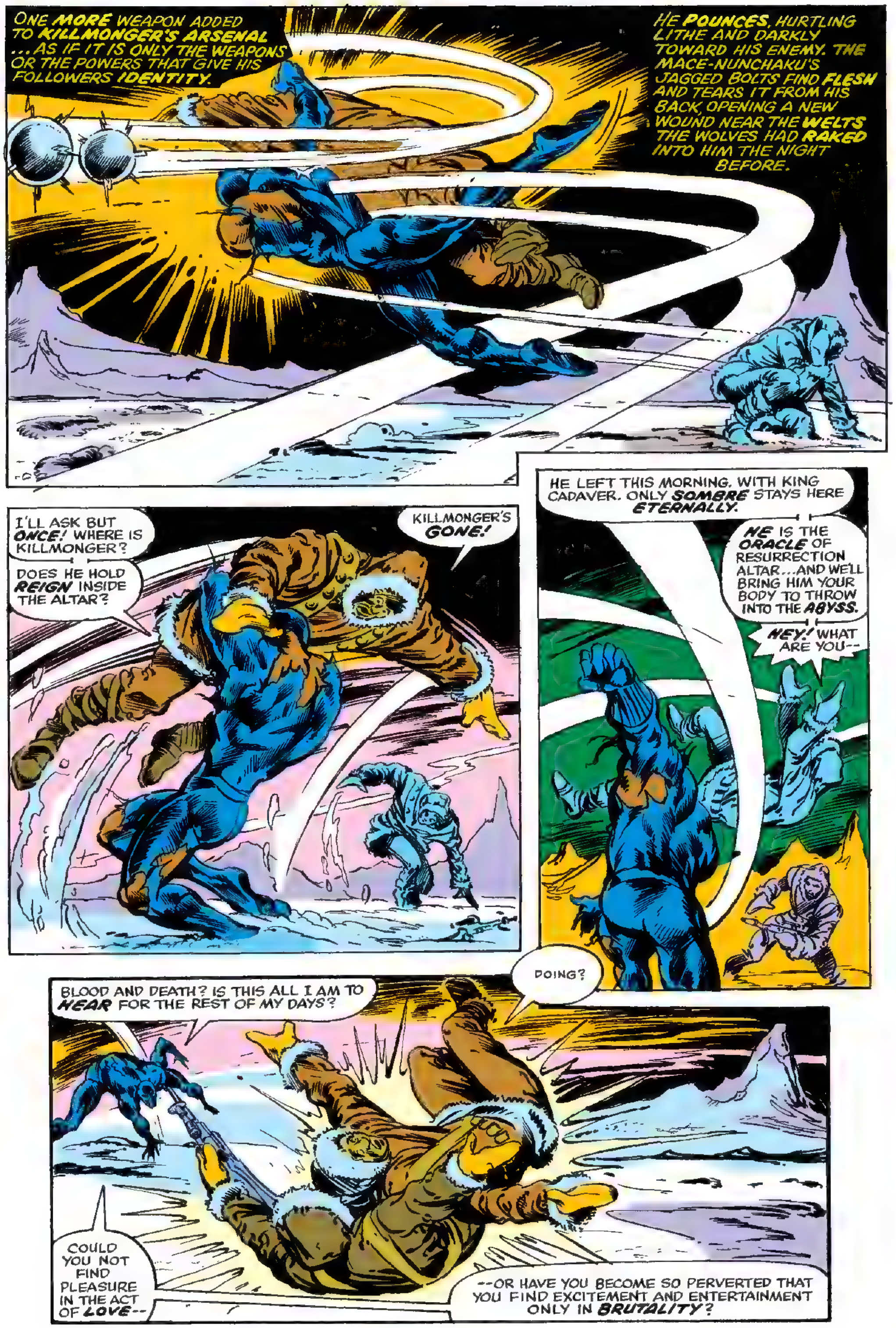
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
WRATH OF THE WHITE GORILLA!
WITHIN THESE PAGES YOU WILL MEET THE MAN CALLED SOMBRE, --AND YOU AREN'T GOING TO LIKE HIM!!

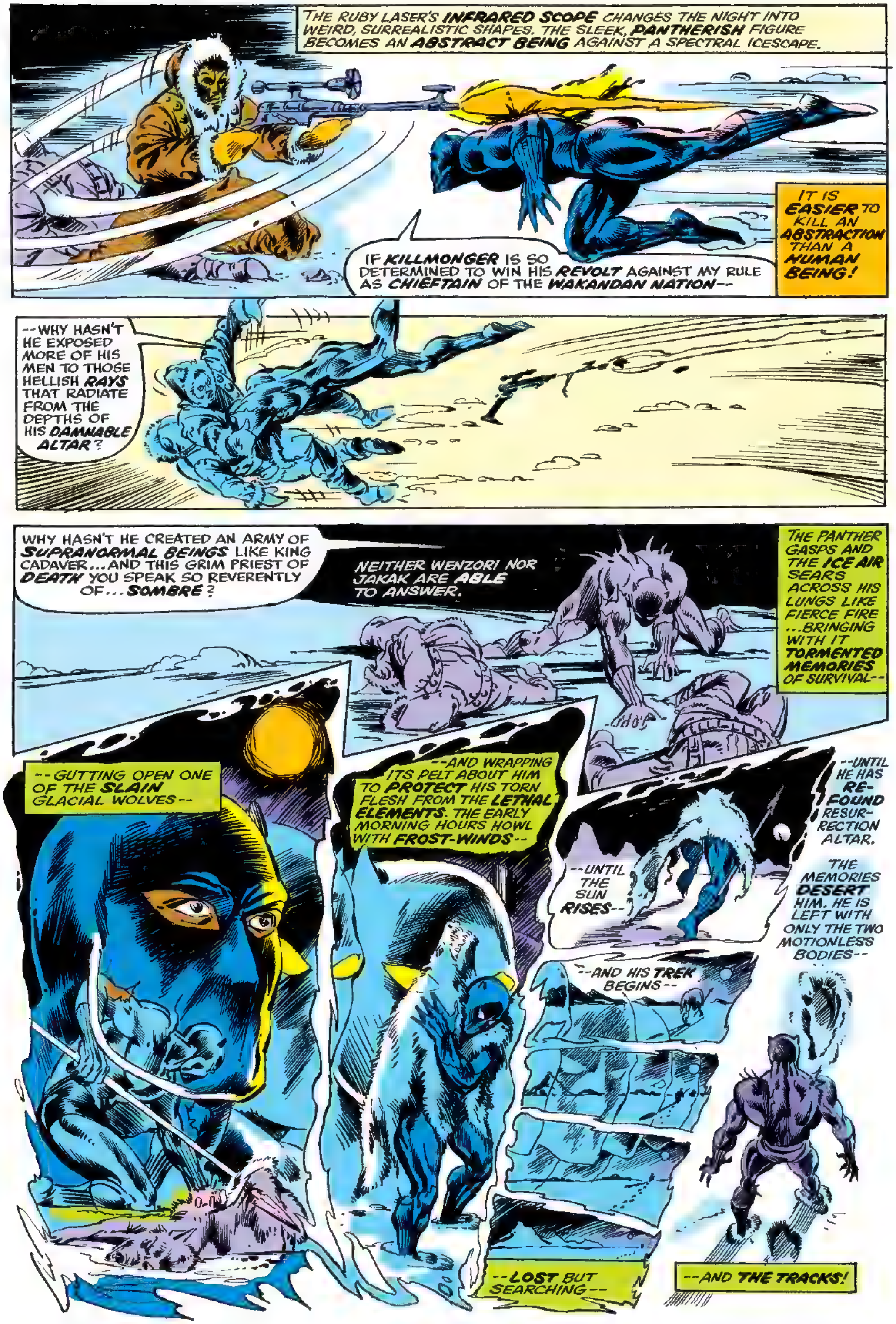
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™

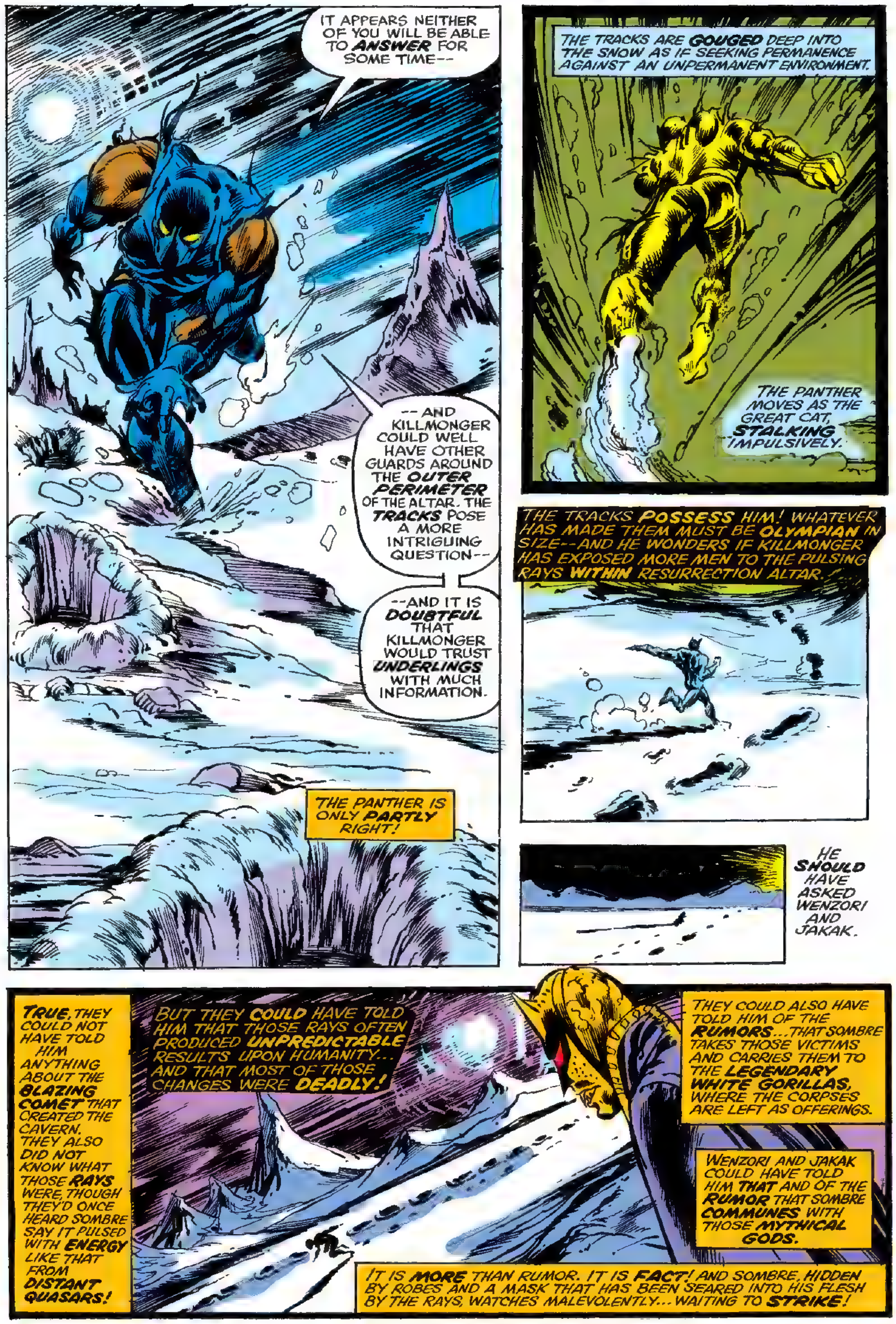
DON McGREGOR *Writer* · BILLY GRAHAM *Pencils* · CRAIG RUSSELL *Inker* · TOM PALMER, *Colorist* · JOE ROSEN, *Letterer* · ROY THOMAS *Editor*



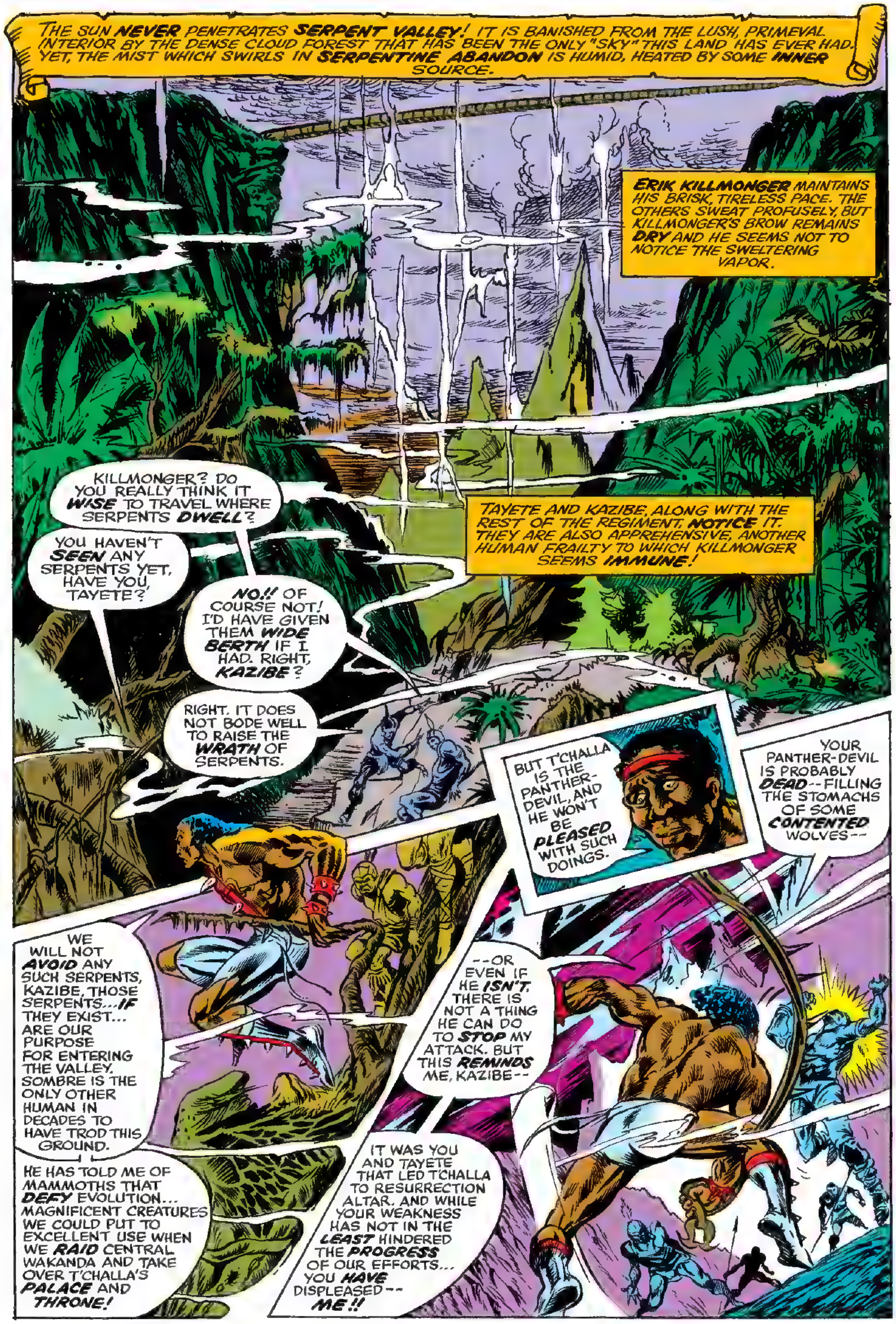
I WOULDN'T IMAGINE YOU GET MANY VISITORS ...DROPPING IN UNEXPECTEDLY--
--BUT I THINK I'VE JUST LOCATED THE WELCOME MAT!
AND I'M CERTAIN YOU WOULDN'T TURN A WEARY WAYFARER AWAY.
HE HAS NOT SPOKEN FOR 24 HOURS, AND THE WORDS COME FROM BLISTERED LIPS, DEEPLY SPLIT BY THE GLACIAL COLD.
DRIED BLOOD IS ON HIS TONGUE, AND SPEAKING HAS RIPPED THE HEALING WOUND OPEN SO THAT FRESH BLOOD SPILLS INTO HIS MOUTH.
HE WONDERS IF THEY HAVE UNDERSTOOD ONE WORD OF HIS CLEVER REPARTEE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU ESCAPED THOSE DEVIL-WOLVES AND THEIR RAVENOUS APPETITES--
--BUT IT IS A SHORT-LIVED VICTORY!
HE IS THE AGILE CAT, SENSING A TRAP AND ASTOUNDINGLY ESCAPING IT!
JAKAK, THE WOLVES ARE NOT THE DEVILS.
HE IS!
LOOK AT HIS EYES!
JAKAK WIELDS THE WEAPON EXPERTLY. IT IS A COMBINATION OF NUNCHAKU AND MACE... AND ITS DESIGN HAS ONLY ONE PURPOSE--
--TO RIP FLESH AND CARVE BONE TO THE MARROW! IT SADDEN THE PANTHER THAT SUC INGENUIT SHOULD B WASTED T DEVISE ANOTHER METHOD O


ONE MORE WEAPON ADDED TO KILLMONGER'S ARSENAL ...AS IF IT IS ONLY THE WEAPONS OR THE POWERS THAT GIVE HIS FOLLOWERS IDENTITY.
HE POUNCES, HURTLING LITHE AND DARKLY TOWARD HIS ENEMY. THE MACE-NUNCHAKU'S JAGGED BOLTS FIND FLESH AND TEARS IT FROM HIS BACK, OPENING A NEW WOUND NEAR THE WELTS THE WOLVES HAD RAKED INTO HIM THE NIGHT BEFORE.
I'LL ASK BUT ONCE! WHERE IS KILLMONGER?
DOES HE HOLD REIGN INSIDE THE ALTAR?
KILLMONGER'S GONE!
HE LEFT THIS MORNING, WITH KING CADAVER. ONLY SOMBRE STAYS HERE ETERNALLY.
HE IS THE ORACLE OF RESURRECTION ALTAR...AND WE'LL BRING HIM YOUR BODY TO THROW INTO THE ABYSS.
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU--
DOING?
BLOOD AND DEATH? IS THIS ALL I AM TO HEAR FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS?
COULD YOU NOT FIND PLEASURE IN THE ACT OF LOVE--
--OR HAVE YOU BECOME SO PERVERTED THAT YOU FIND EXCITEMENT AND ENTERTAINMENT ONLY IN BRUTALITY?


THE RUBY LASER'S INFRARED SCOPE CHANGES THE NIGHT INTO WEIRD, SURREALISTIC SHAPES. THE SLEEK, PANTHERISH FIGURE BECOMES AN ABSTRACT BEING AGAINST A SPECTRAL ICESCAPE.
IT IS EASIER TO KILL AN ABSTRACTION THAN A HUMAN BEING!
IF KILLMONGER IS SO DETERMINED TO WIN HIS REVOLT AGAINST MY RULE AS CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAN NATION--
--WHY HASN'T HE EXPOSED MORE OF HIS MEN TO THOSE HELLISH RAYS THAT RADIATE FROM THE DEPTHS OF HIS DAMNABLE ALTAR?
WHY HASN'T HE CREATED AN ARMY OF SUPRANORMAL BEINGS LIKE KING CADAVER... AND THIS GRIM PRIEST OF DEATH YOU SPEAK SO REVERENTLY OF... SOMBRE?
NEITHER WENZORI NOR JAKAK ARE ABLE TO ANSWER.
THE PANTHER GASPS AND THE ICE AIR SEARS ACROSS HIS LUNGS LIKE FIERCE FIRE ...BRINGING WITH IT TORMENTED MEMORIES OF SURVIVAL--
--GUTTING OPEN ONE OF THE SLAIN GLACIAL WOLVES--
--AND WRAPPING ITS PELT ABOUT HIM TO PROTECT HIS TORN FLESH FROM THE LETHAL ELEMENTS. THE EARLY MORNING HOURS HOWL WITH FROST-WINDS--
--UNTIL THE SUN RISES--
--UNTIL HE HAS RE-FOUND RESUR-RECTION ALTAR.
THE MEMORIES DESERT HIM. HE IS LEFT WITH ONLY THE TWO MOTIONLESS BODIES--
--AND HIS TREK BEGINS--
--LOST BUT SEARCHING--
--AND THE TRACKS!



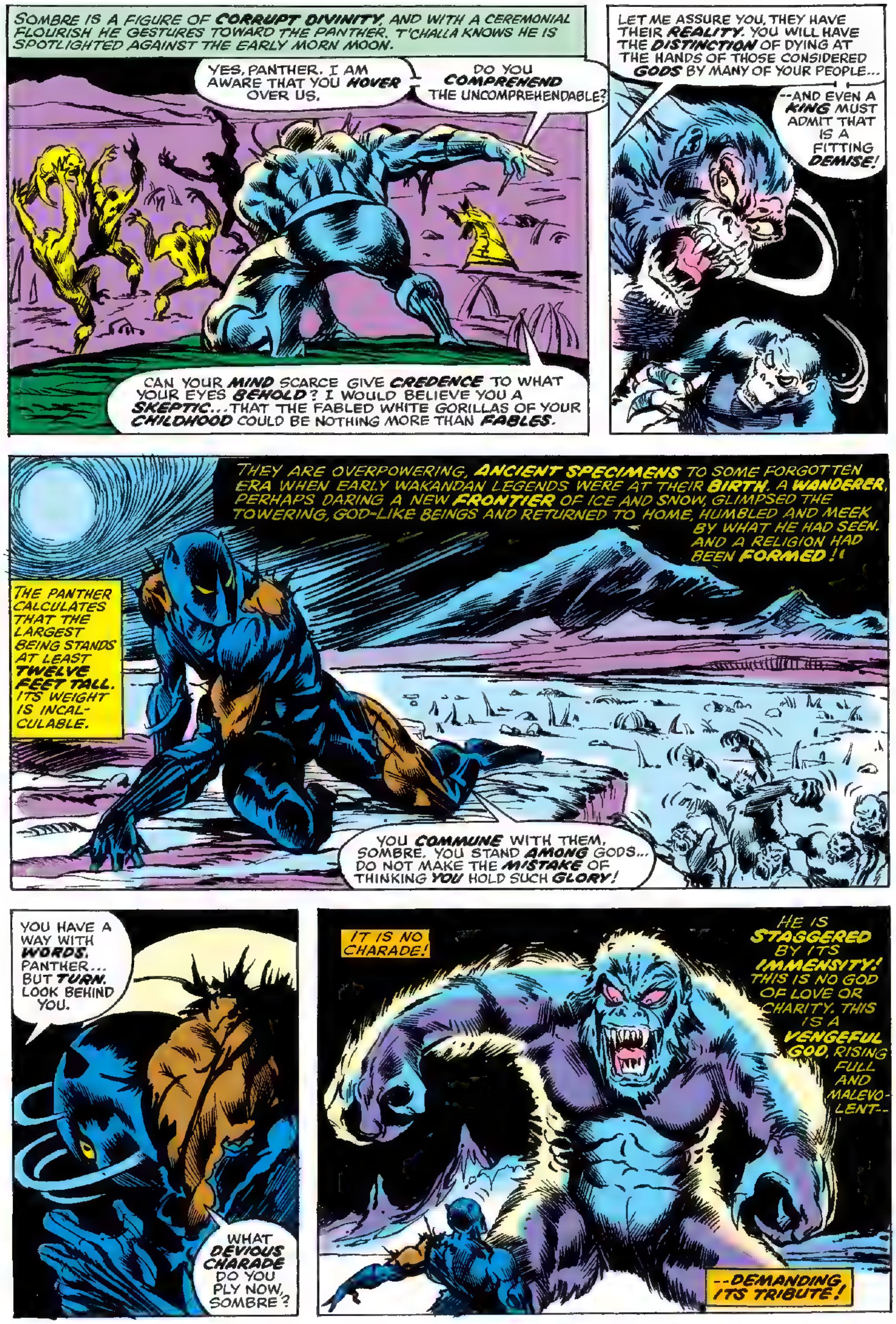
IT APPEARS NEITHER OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ANSWER FOR SOME TIME--
--AND KILLMONGER COULD WELL HAVE OTHER GUARDS AROUND THE OUTER PERIMETER OF THE ALTAR. THE TRACKS POSE A MORE INTRIGUING QUESTION--
--AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT KILLMONGER WOULD TRUST UNDERLINGS WITH MUCH INFORMATION.
THE PANTHER IS ONLY PARTLY RIGHT!
THE TRACKS ARE GOUGED DEEP INTO THE SNOW AS IF SEEKING PERMANENCE AGAINST AN UNPERMANENT ENVIRONMENT.
THE PANTHER MOVES AS THE GREAT CAT, STALKING IMPULSIVELY.
THE TRACKS POSSESS HIM! WHATEVER HAS MADE THEM MUST BE OLYMPIAN IN SIZE--AND HE WONDERS IF KILLMONGER HAS EXPOSED MORE MEN TO THE PULSING RAYS WITHIN RESURRECTION ALTAR...!
HE SHOULD HAVE ASKED WENZORI AND JAKAK.
TRUE, THEY COULD NOT HAVE TOLD HIM ANYTHING ABOUT THE BLAZING COMET THAT CREATED THE CAVERN. THEY ALSO DID NOT KNOW WHAT THOSE RAYS WERE, THOUGH THEY'D ONCE HEARD SOMBRE SAY IT PULSED WITH ENERGY LIKE THAT FROM DISTANT QUASARS!
BUT THEY COULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT THOSE RAYS OFTEN PRODUCED UNPREDICTABLE RESULTS UPON HUMANITY... AND THAT MOST OF THOSE CHANGES WERE DEADLY!
THEY COULD ALSO HAVE TOLD HIM OF THE RUMORS...THAT SOMBRE TAKES THOSE VICTIMS AND CARRIES THEM TO THE LEGENDARY WHITE GORILLAS, WHERE THE CORPSES ARE LEFT AS OFFERINGS.
WENZORI AND JAKAK COULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT AND OF THE RUMOR THAT SOMBRE COMMUNES WITH THOSE MYTHICAL GODS.
IT IS MORE THAN RUMOR. IT IS FACT! AND SOMBRE, HIDDEN BY ROBES AND A MASK THAT HAS BEEN SEARED INTO HIS FLESH BY THE RAYS, WATCHES MALEVOLENTLY... WAITING TO STRIKE!


THE SUN NEVER PENETRATES SERPENT VALLEY! IT IS BANISHED FROM THE LUSH, PRIMEVAL INTERIOR BY THE DENSE CLOUD FOREST THAT HAS BEEN THE ONLY "SKY" THIS LAND HAS EVER HAD. YET, THE MIST WHICH SWIRLS IN SERPENTINE ABANDON IS HUMID, HEATED BY SOME INNER SOURCE.
ERIK KILLMONGER MAINTAINS HIS BRISK, TIRELESS PACE. THE OTHERS SWEAT PROFUSELY, BUT KILLMONGER'S BROW REMAINS DRY AND HE SEEMS NOT TO NOTICE THE SWELTERING VAPOR.
KILLMONGER? DO YOU REALLY THINK IT WISE TO TRAVEL WHERE SERPENTS DWELL?
TAYETE AND KAZIBE, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE REGIMENT, NOTICE IT. THEY ARE ALSO APPREHENSIVE, ANOTHER HUMAN FRAILTY TO WHICH KILLMONGER SEEMS IMMUNE!
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SERPENTS YET, HAVE YOU, TAYETE?
NO!! OF COURSE NOT! I'D HAVE GIVEN THEM WIDE BERTH IF I HAD. RIGHT, KAZIBE?
RIGHT. IT DOES NOT BODE WELL TO RAISE THE WRATH OF SERPENTS.
BUT T'CHALLA IS THE PANTHER-DEVIL, AND HE WON'T BE PLEASED WITH SUCH DOINGS.
YOUR PANTHER-DEVIL IS PROBABLY DEAD--FILLING THE STOMACHS OF SOME CONTENTED WOLVES--
--OR EVEN IF HE ISN'T, THERE IS NOT A THING HE CAN DO TO STOP MY ATTACK. BUT THIS REMINDS ME, KAZIBE--
WE WILL NOT AVOID ANY SUCH SERPENTS, KAZIBE. THOSE SERPENTS...IF THEY EXIST... ARE OUR PURPOSE FOR ENTERING THE VALLEY. SOMBRE IS THE ONLY OTHER HUMAN IN DECADES TO HAVE TROD THIS GROUND.
HE HAS TOLD ME OF MAMMOTHS THAT DEFY EVOLUTION... MAGNIFICENT CREATURES WE COULD PUT TO EXCELLENT USE WHEN WE RAID CENTRAL WAKANDA AND TAKE OVER T'CHALLA'S PALACE AND THRONE!
IT WAS YOU AND TAYETE THAT LED T'CHALLA TO RESURRECTION ALTAR. AND WHILE YOUR WEAKNESS HAS NOT IN THE LEAST HINDERED THE PROGRESS OF OUR EFFORTS... YOU HAVE DISPLEASED--ME!!

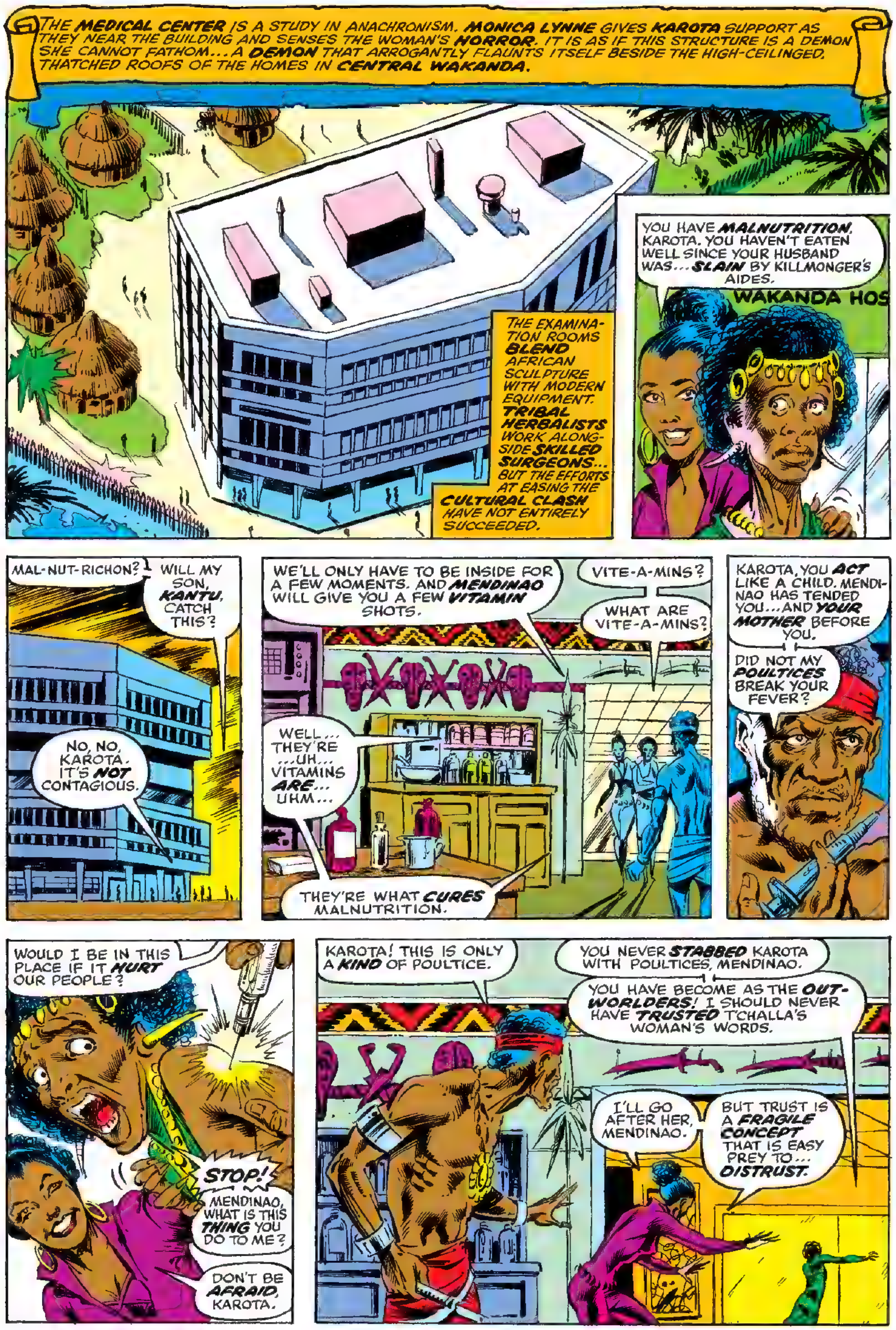
THE SPIKED BELT LASHES OUT IN COUNTERPOINT TO KILLMONGER'S CALMLY SPOKEN WORDS. KAZIBE'S FLESH RIPS UNDER THE SPIKES FROM CHEST TO STOMACH. HE IS DEFENSLESS.
KILLMONGER! YOU... YOU'LL KILL KAZIBE!
PL... PLEASE... DON'T... DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO STOP YOU.
STOP ME? YOU, TAYETE? YOU'D STOP ERIK KILLMONGER?
YOU HAVE LESS CHANCE THAN T'CHALLA... YOUR PANTHER-DEVIL--
I TREAT MY LIEUTENANTS WITH RESPECT DUE THEIR RANKS, BUT BETRAYAL FOR ANY REASON EARNS BUT ONE REWARD.
AND WHAT OF IT, TAYETE?
WHAT'LL YOU DO ABOUT IT WHILE HE BEGS FOR MERCY HE WILL NOT RECEIVE.
NOW, TAYETE... DO YOU WANT TO CRAWL?
I... I WON'T LE... LET YOU KI... KILL KAZIBE. COU... COULDN'T WE... WE TALK ABOUT THIS?
KILLMONGER'S FACE IS IMPLACABLE. HIS EYES ARE DARK WITH EBON COLD WHICH, MYSIFYINGLY, CHANGES TO EBON FLAME! HE BEGINS TO LAUGH, RAUCOUSLY.
WELL DONE, TAYETE.
YOU SURPRISED ME. I DIDN'T THINK YOU CAPABLE OF SUCH LOYALTY!
PICK UP YOUR WHIMPERING FRIEND AND LET US PROCEED. YOU MAY YET REDEEM YOURSELVES.
BUT HURRY, TAYETE, LEST I CHANGE MY MIND. COME, I'LL LET YOU HAVE FIRST CHANCE AT BREAKING ONE OF THESE TREMENDOUS CREATURES.
YOU... RISKED YOUR LIFE FOR ME.
WHAT ELSE WOULD ONE WITH MY COURAGE DO?
I ONLY WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO DO IT AT THE EXPENSE OF MY OWN LIFE.

THE SKY IS SWEPT WITH AN ARTIST'S PASSION... BEFORE IT HAS BEEN SOURED!
THE PANTHER IS MOVED BY A COMPULSIVE FORCE THAT IS KIN TO THE KIND THAT DRIVES AN ARTIST ONWARD, HARDLY AWARE OF WHAT HE IS PURSUING... SOMETIMES COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF WHAT HE IS STRIVING TO ACHIEVE.
IT IS A NIGHT WHEN A MAN CAN REACH AND BELIEVE HE CAN TOUCH THE STARS--
--THAT HE IS A PART OF THE COSMOLOGICAL SCHEME OF THINGS!
A NIGHT WHEN A MAN COULD BELIEVE HE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE UNIVERSE.
NOT OMNIPOTENT. NOT SUPERIOR.
JUST UNIQUE AND UNTO HIMSELF.
THE PANTHER KNOWS HE IS APPROACHING THE TRAIL'S END... THAT HE HAS NEARLY REACHED ITS DESTINATION--
--AND HE IS HESITANT. HIS OWN DESTINATION SEEMED INSEPARABLY LINKED WITH THAT OF THE TRACKS.
THERE IS A RISING OF UNEARTHLY VOICES FROM BEYOND, BECKONING HIM TOWARD THE EDGE--
--AND THE VIEW THAT LIES BEFORE HIM IS STAGGERING!

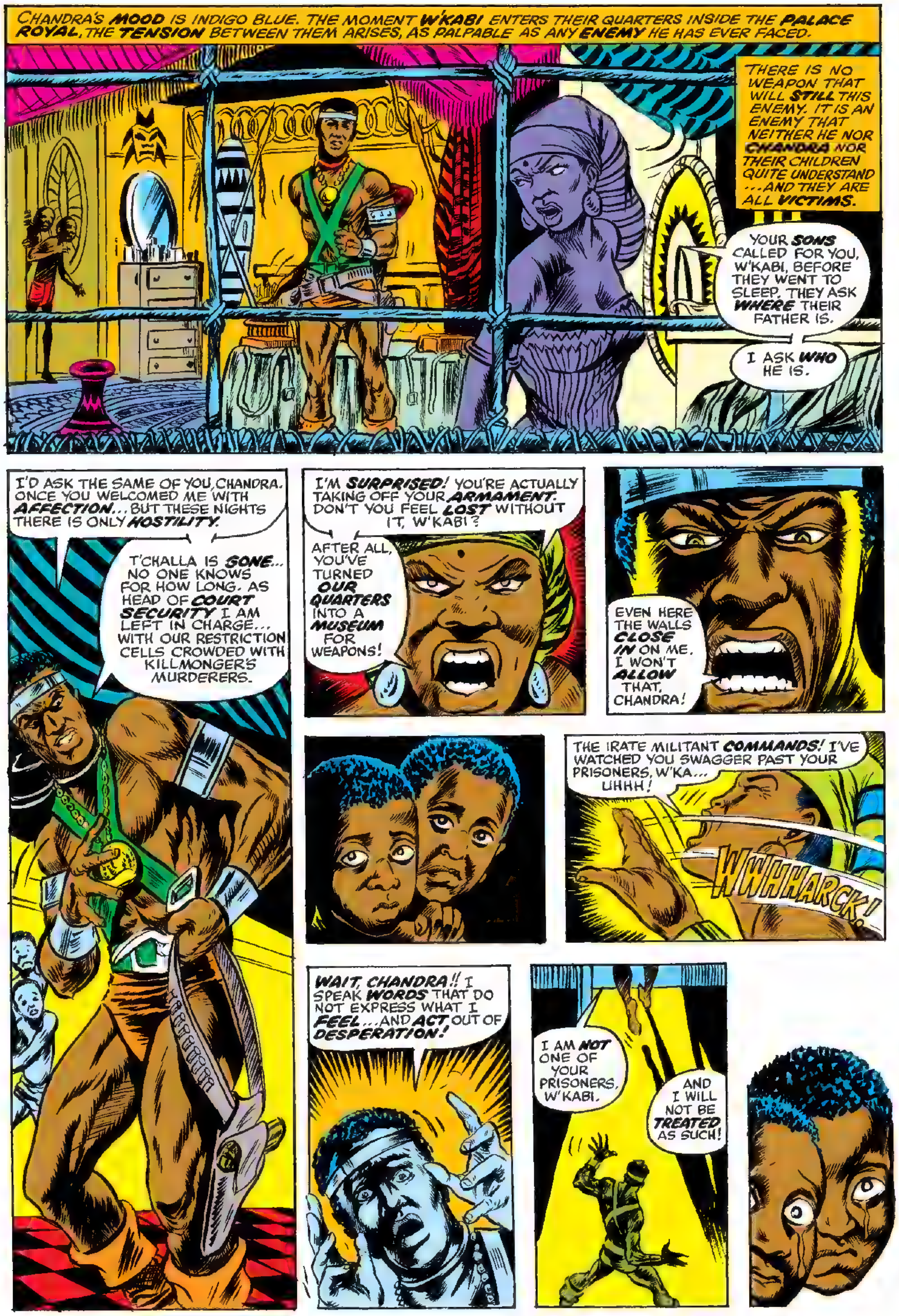
THERE ARE TWO MAJOR RELIGIONS IN WAKANDA. T'CHALLA WEARS THE SACRED ATTIRE OF THE PANTHER RELIGION. IT IS TORN AND CRUSTED WITH BLOOD AND SWEAT, BUT IT IS NO LESS SACRED A GARMENT.
IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE AGONY FOR A MAN TO MEET HIS GODS... ESPECIALLY GODS THAT HE NEVER BELIEVED IN!
THE REGAL, SAVAGE BEINGS THAT CONGREGATE BELOW HIM ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF WAKANDA'S SECOND RELIGION.
THEY HAVE THE STATURE OF GODS... THE AWE-INSPIRING WHITE GORILLAS!
SOMBRE STANDS IN THEIR MIDST, PURPLE VELVET ROBES SWIRLING. HE IS A PERVERTED MONK WHO RADIATES EVIL NOT SERENITY... HIS ARMS RAISED IN FALSE SUPPLICATION!
YOU HAVE SENSED MY PRESENCE AS I APPROACHED, AND YOU ARE AWARE THERE WAS A SECOND PRESENCE... NOT FAR FROM MY OWN.
YOU WONDER WHERE IS MY OFFERING TO YOU! ...YES, THERE IS AN OFFERING.
BUT IT IS A LIVE OFFERING!
ABOVE YOU, GREAT ONES! THERE IS YOUR SACRIFICE!

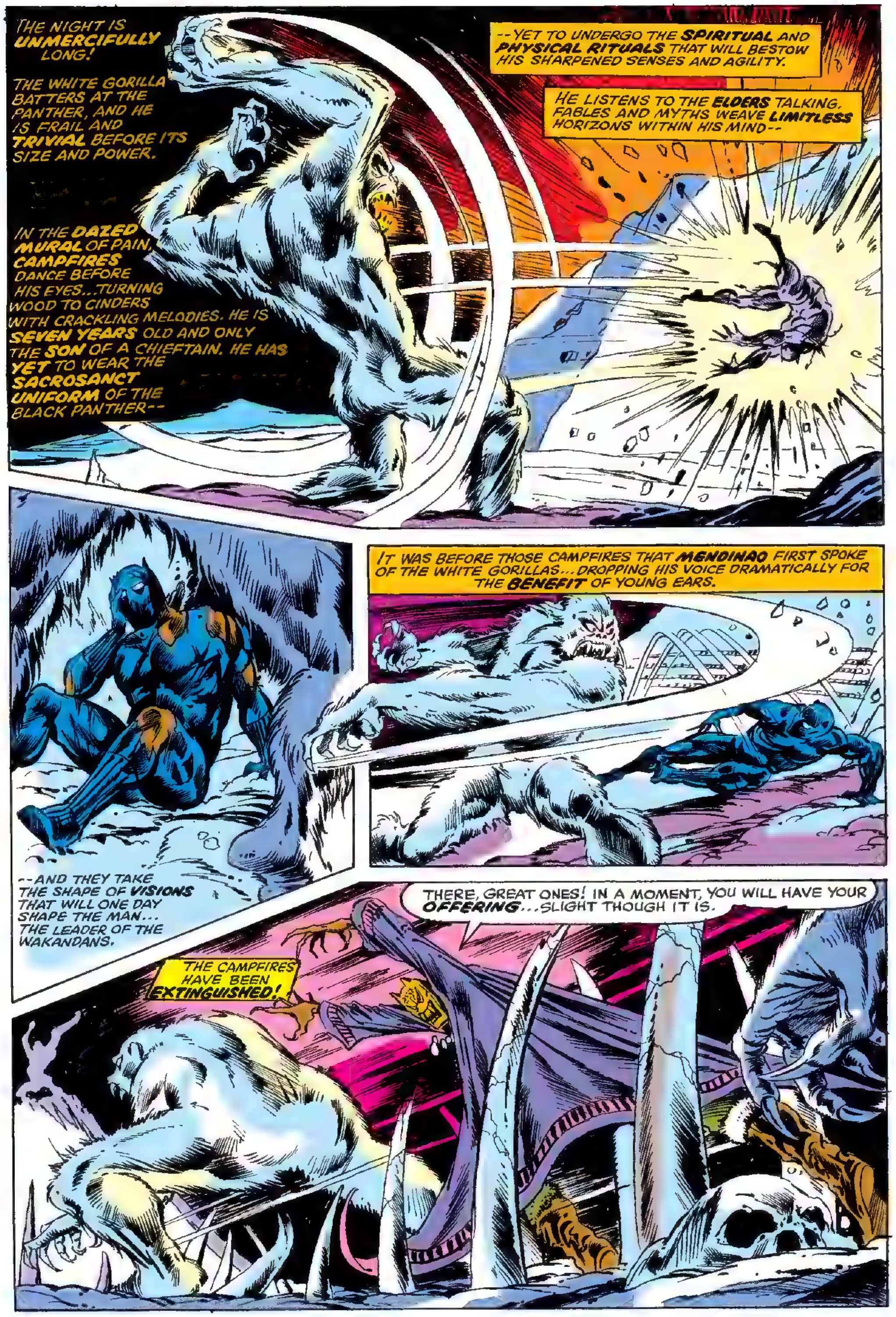


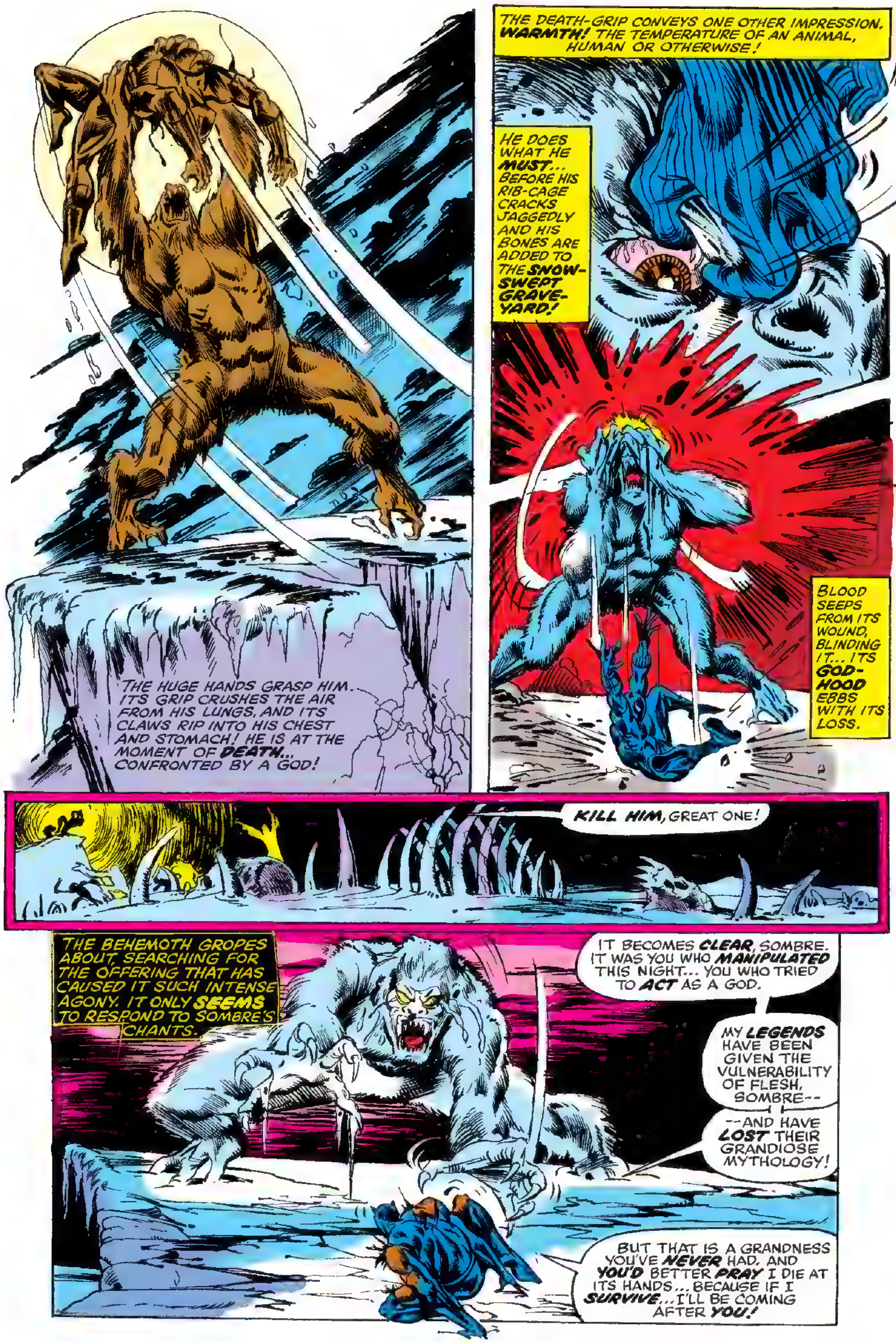
SOMBRE IS A FIGURE OF CORRUPT DIVINITY, AND WITH A CEREMONIAL FLOURISH HE GESTURES TOWARD THE PANTHER. T'CHALLA KNOWS HE IS SPOTLIGHTED AGAINST THE EARLY MORN MOON.
YES, PANTHER. I AM AWARE THAT YOU HOVER OVER US.
DO YOU COMPREHEND THE UNCOMPREHENDABLE?
CAN YOUR MIND SCARCE GIVE CREDENCE TO WHAT YOUR EYES BEHOLD? I WOULD BELIEVE YOU A SKEPTIC...THAT THE FABLED WHITE GORILLAS OF YOUR CHILDHOOD COULD BE NOTHING MORE THAN FABLES.
LET ME ASSURE YOU, THEY HAVE THEIR REALITY. YOU WILL HAVE THE DISTINCTION OF DYING AT THE HANDS OF THOSE CONSIDERED GODS BY MANY OF YOUR PEOPLE...
--AND EVEN A KING MUST ADMIT THAT IS A FITTING DEMISE!
THEY ARE OVERPOWERING, ANCIENT SPECIMENS TO SOME FORGOTTEN ERA WHEN EARLY WAKANDAN LEGENDS WERE AT THEIR BIRTH. A WANDERER, PERHAPS DARING A NEW FRONTIER OF ICE AND SNOW, GLIMPSED THE TOWERING, GOD-LIKE BEINGS AND RETURNED TO HOME, HUMBLED AND MEEK BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN. AND A RELIGION HAD BEEN FORMED!!
THE PANTHER CALCULATES THAT THE LARGEST BEING STANDS AT LEAST TWELVE FEET TALL. ITS WEIGHT IS INCALCULABLE.
YOU COMMUNE WITH THEM, SOMBRE. YOU STAND AMONG GODS... DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING YOU HOLD SUCH GLORY!
YOU HAVE A WAY WITH WORDS, PANTHER... BUT TURN. LOOK BEHIND YOU.
WHAT DEVIOUS CHARADE DO YOU PLY NOW, SOMBRE?
IT IS NO CHARADE!
HE IS STAGGERED BY ITS IMMENSITY! THIS IS NO GOD OF LOVE OR CHARITY. THIS IS A VENGEFUL GOD, RISING FULL AND MALEVO-LENT--
--DEMANDING ITS TRIBUTE!

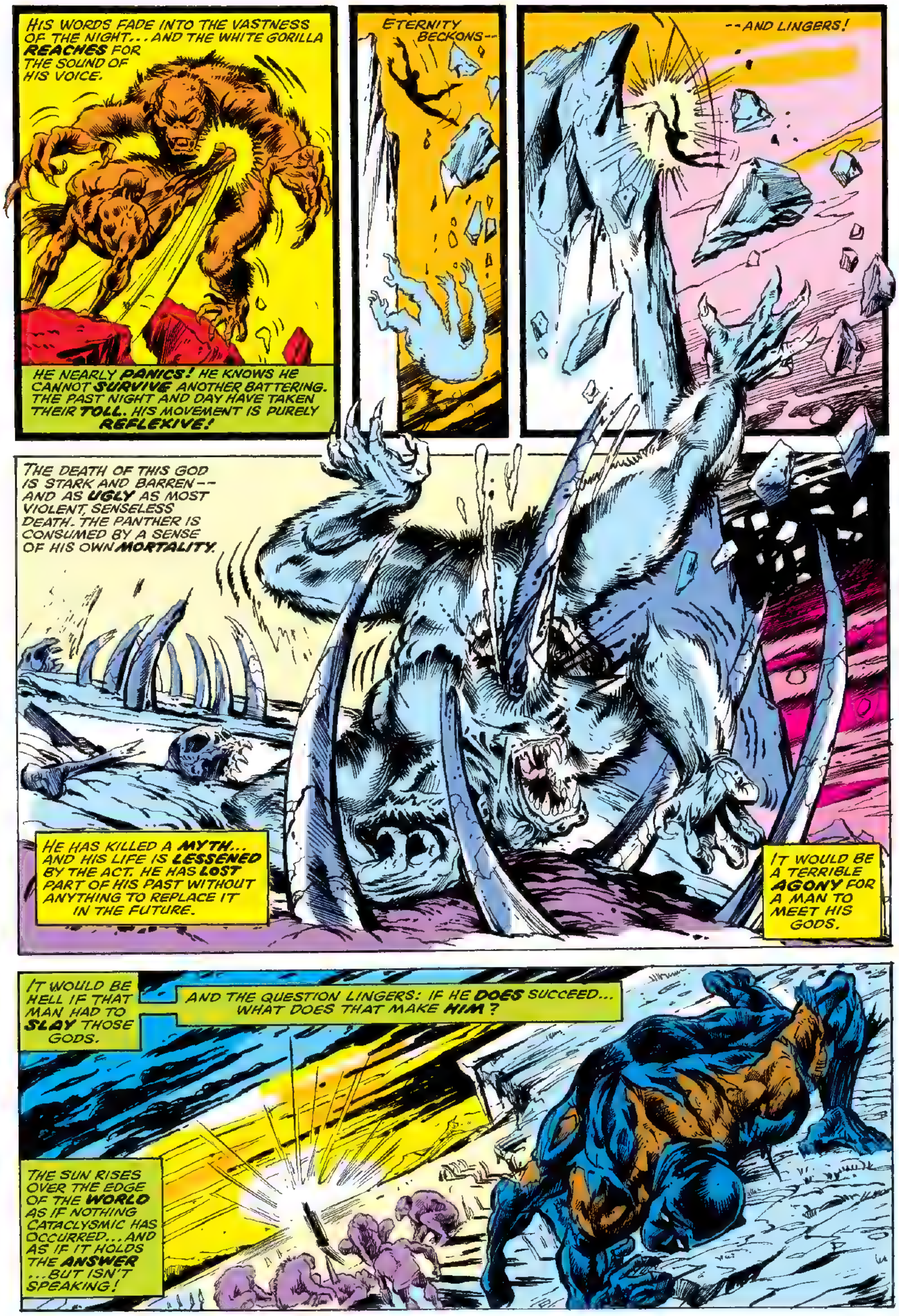


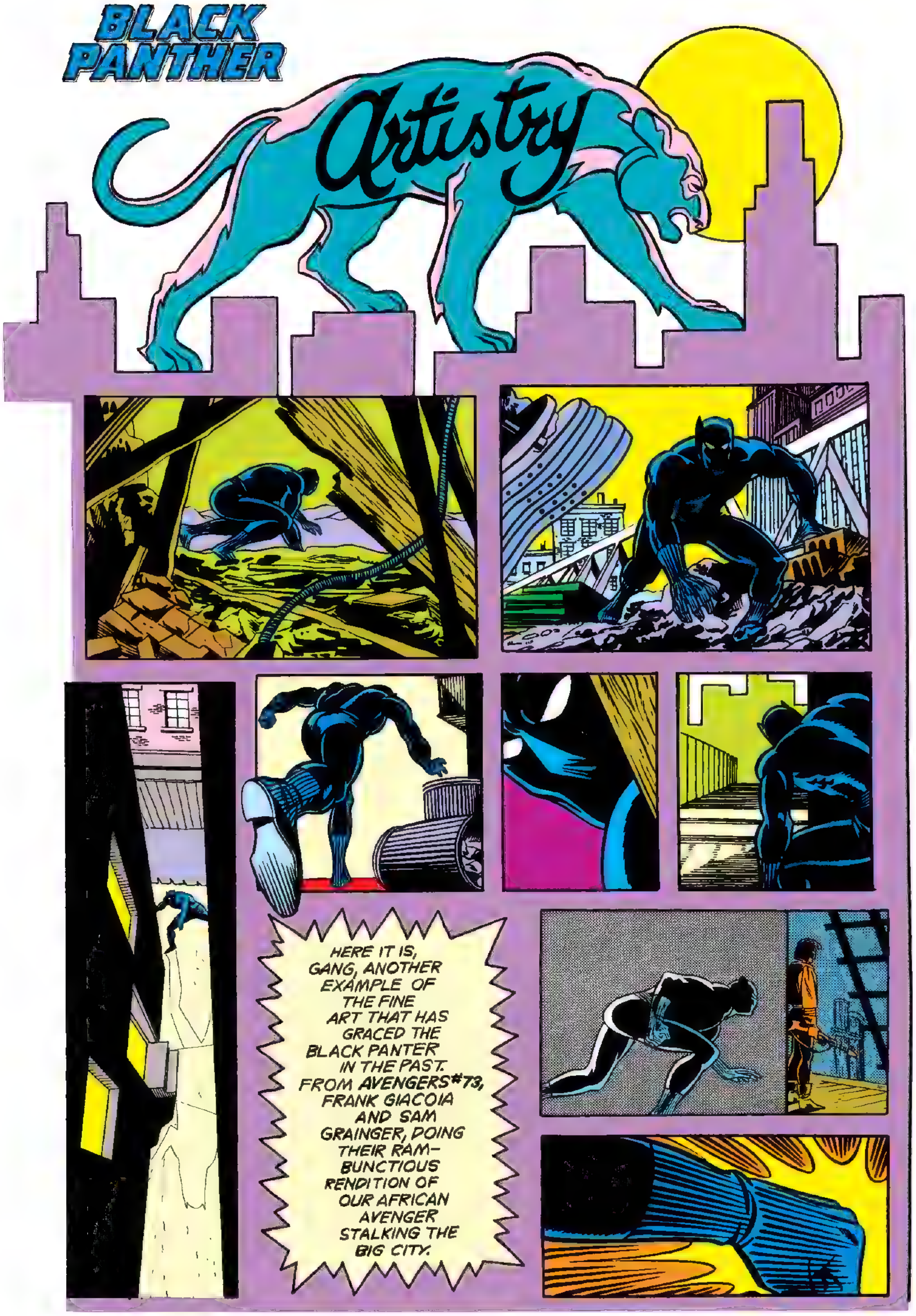
THE MEDICAL CENTER IS A STUDY IN ANACHRONISM. MONICA LYNNE GIVES KAROTA SUPPORT AS THEY NEAR THE BUILDING AND SENSES THE WOMAN'S HORROR. IT IS AS IF THIS STRUCTURE IS A DEMON SHE CANNOT FATHOM... A DEMON THAT ARROGANTLY FLAUNTS ITSELF BESIDE THE HIGH-CEILINGED, THATCHED ROOFS OF THE HOMES IN CENTRAL WAKANDA.
THE EXAMINATION ROOMS BLEND AFRICAN SCULPTURE WITH MODERN EQUIPMENT. TRIBAL HERBALISTS WORK ALONGSIDE SKILLED SURGEONS... BUT THE EFFORTS AT EASING THE CULTURAL CLASH HAVE NOT ENTIRELY SUCCEEDED.
YOU HAVE MALNUTRITION, KAROTA. YOU HAVEN'T EATEN WELL SINCE YOUR HUSBAND WAS... SLAIN BY KILLMONGER'S AIDES.
WAKANDA HOS
MAL-NUT-RICHON?
WILL MY SON, KANTU, CATCH THIS?
NO, NO, KAROTA. IT'S NOT CONTAGIOUS.
WE'LL ONLY HAVE TO BE INSIDE FOR A FEW MOMENTS. AND MENDINAO WILL GIVE YOU A FEW VITAMIN SHOTS.
VITE-A-MINS?
WHAT ARE VITE-A-MINS?
WELL... THEY'RE ...UH... VITAMINS ARE... UHM...
THEY'RE WHAT CURES MALNUTRITION.
KAROTA, YOU ACT LIKE A CHILD. MENDINAO HAS TENDED YOU... AND YOUR MOTHER BEFORE YOU.
DID NOT MY POULTICES BREAK YOUR FEVER?
WOULD I BE IN THIS PLACE IF IT HURT OUR PEOPLE?
STOP!
MENDINAO, WHAT IS THIS THING YOU DO TO ME?
DON'T BE AFRAID, KAROTA.
KAROTA! THIS IS ONLY A KIND OF POULTICE.
YOU NEVER STABBED KAROTA WITH POULTICES, MENDINAO.
YOU HAVE BECOME AS THE OUTWORLDERS! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRUSTED T'CHALLA'S WOMAN'S WORDS.
I'LL GO AFTER HER, MENDINAO.
BUT TRUST IS A FRAGILE CONCEPT THAT IS EASY PREY TO... DISTRUST.

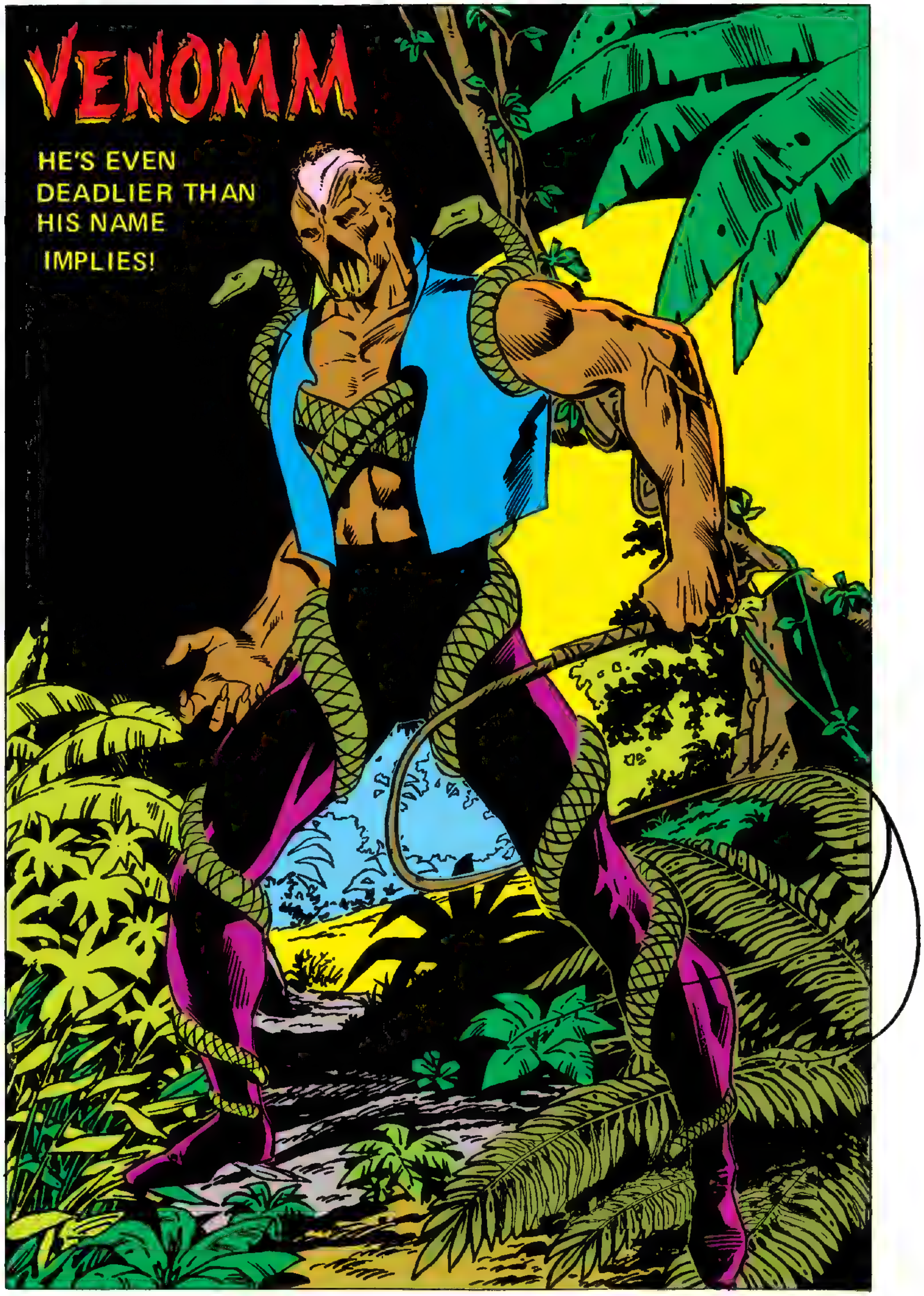

CHANDRA'S MOOD IS INDIGO BLUE. THE MOMENT W'KABI ENTERS THEIR QUARTERS INSIDE THE PALACE ROYAL, THE TENSION BETWEEN THEM ARISES, AS PALPABLE AS ANY ENEMY HE HAS EVER FACED.
THERE IS NO WEAPON THAT WILL STILL THIS ENEMY. IT IS AN ENEMY THAT NEITHER HE NOR [redacted] NOR THEIR CHILDREN QUITE UNDERSTAND ...AND THEY ARE ALL VICTIMS.
YOUR SONS CALLED FOR YOU, W'KABI, BEFORE THEY WENT TO SLEEP. THEY ASK WHERE THEIR FATHER IS.
I ASK WHO HE IS.
I'D ASK THE SAME OF YOU, CHANDRA. ONCE YOU WELCOMED ME WITH AFFECTION... BUT THESE NIGHTS THERE IS ONLY HOSTILITY.
T'CHALLA IS GONE... NO ONE KNOWS FOR HOW LONG. AS HEAD OF COURT SECURITY I AM LEFT IN CHARGE... WITH OUR RESTRICTION CELLS CROWDED WITH KILLMONGER'S MURDERERS.
I'M SURPRISED! YOU'RE ACTUALLY TAKING OFF YOUR ARMAMENT. DON'T YOU FEEL LOST WITHOUT IT, W'KABI?
AFTER ALL, YOU'VE TURNED OUR QUARTERS INTO A MUSEUM FOR WEAPONS!
EVEN HERE THE WALLS CLOSE IN ON ME. I WON'T ALLOW THAT, CHANDRA!
THE IRATE MILITANT COMMANDS! I'VE WATCHED YOU SWAGGER PAST YOUR PRISONERS, W'KA... UHHH!
WWHHARCK!
WAIT, CHANDRA!! I SPEAK WORDS THAT DO NOT EXPRESS WHAT I FEEL... AND ACT OUT OF DESPERATION!
I AM NOT ONE OF YOUR PRISONERS, W'KABI.
AND I WILL NOT BE TREATED AS SUCH!


THE NIGHT IS UNMERCIFULLY LONG!
THE WHITE GORILLA BATTERS AT THE PANTHER, AND HE IS FRAIL AND TRIVIAL BEFORE ITS SIZE AND POWER.
IN THE DAZED MURAL OF PAIN, CAMPFIRES DANCE BEFORE HIS EYES...TURNING WOOD TO CINDERS WITH CRACKLING MELODIES. HE IS SEVEN YEARS OLD AND ONLY THE SON OF A CHIEFTAIN. HE HAS YET TO WEAR THE SACROSANCT UNIFORM OF THE BLACK PANTHER--
--YET TO UNDERGO THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL RITUALS THAT WILL BESTOW HIS SHARPENED SENSES AND AGILITY.
HE LISTENS TO THE ELDERS TALKING, FABLES AND MYTHS WEAVE LIMITLESS HORIZONS WITHIN HIS MIND--
IT WAS BEFORE THOSE CAMPFIRES THAT MENDINAO FIRST SPOKE OF THE WHITE GORILLAS...DROPPING HIS VOICE DRAMATICALLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF YOUNG EARS.
--AND THEY TAKE THE SHAPE OF VISIONS THAT WILL ONE DAY SHAPE THE MAN... THE LEADER OF THE WAKANDANS.
THE CAMPFIRES HAVE BEEN EXTINGUISHED!
THERE, GREAT ONES! IN A MOMENT, YOU WILL HAVE YOUR OFFERING...SLIGHT THOUGH IT IS.


THE HUGE HANDS GRASP HIM. ITS GRIP CRUSHES THE AIR FROM HIS LUNGS, AND ITS CLAWS RIP INTO HIS CHEST AND STOMACH! HE IS AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH... CONFRONTED BY A GOD!
THE DEATH-GRIP CONVEYS ONE OTHER IMPRESSION. WARMTH! THE TEMPERATURE OF AN ANIMAL, HUMAN OR OTHERWISE!
HE DOES WHAT HE MUST... BEFORE HIS RIB-CAGE CRACKS JAGGEDLY AND HIS BONES ARE ADDED TO THE SNOW-SWEPT GRAVE-YARD!
BLOOD SEEPS FROM ITS WOUND, BLINDING IT... ITS GOD-HOOD EBBS WITH ITS LOSS.
KILL HIM, GREAT ONE!
THE BEHEMOTH GROPES ABOUT, SEARCHING FOR THE OFFERING THAT HAS CAUSED IT SUCH INTENSE AGONY. IT ONLY SEEMS TO RESPOND TO SOMBRE'S CHANTS.
IT BECOMES CLEAR, SOMBRE. IT WAS YOU WHO MANIPULATED THIS NIGHT... YOU WHO TRIED TO ACT AS A GOD.
MY LEGENDS HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE VULNERABILITY OF FLESH, SOMBRE--
--AND HAVE LOST THEIR GRANDIOSE MYTHOLOGY!
BUT THAT IS A GRANDNESS YOU'VE NEVER HAD. AND YOU'D BETTER PRAY I DIE AT ITS HANDS... BECAUSE IF I SURVIVE... I'LL BE COMING AFTER YOU!


HIS WORDS FADE INTO THE VASTNESS OF THE NIGHT... AND THE WHITE GORILLA REACHES FOR THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE.
HE NEARLY PANICS! HE KNOWS HE CANNOT SURVIVE ANOTHER BATTERING. THE PAST NIGHT AND DAY HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL. HIS MOVEMENT IS PURELY REFLEXIVE!
ETERNITY BECKONS--
--AND LINGERS!
THE DEATH OF THIS GOD IS STARK AND BARREN--AND AS UGLY AS MOST VIOLENT, SENSELESS DEATH. THE PANTHER IS CONSUMED BY A SENSE OF HIS OWN MORTALITY.
HE HAS KILLED A MYTH... AND HIS LIFE IS LESSENED BY THE ACT. HE HAS LOST PART OF HIS PAST WITHOUT ANYTHING TO REPLACE IT IN THE FUTURE.
IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE AGONY FOR A MAN TO MEET HIS GODS.
IT WOULD BE HELL IF THAT MAN HAD TO SLAY THOSE GODS.
AND THE QUESTION LINGERS: IF HE DOES SUCCEED... WHAT DOES THAT MAKE HIM?
THE SUN RISES OVER THE EDGE OF THE WORLD AS IF NOTHING CATACLYSMIC HAS OCCURRED... AND AS IF IT HOLDS THE ANSWER ...BUT ISN'T SPEAKING!


BLACK PANTHER
Artistry
HERE IT IS, GANG, ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE FINE ART THAT HAS GRACED THE BLACK PANTER IN THE PAST. FROM AVENGERS #73, FRANK GIACOIA AND SAM GRAINGER, DOING THEIR RAMBUNCTIOUS RENDITION OF OUR AFRICAN AVENGER STALKING THE BIG CITY.


VENOMM
HE'S EVEN DEADLIER THAN HIS NAME IMPLIES!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

C/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

Dear Roy, Don, Billy, and Klaus,

First, an apology: I'm sorry for not having written to you about JUNGLE ACTION #10. But I'm even more sorry about not being able to purchase the book in the first place. Auuuugggghhh, oh, the exquisite agony of searching countless racks in endless stores in a vain attempt to unearth the mystery behind the missing Panther mags, only to be forced into admitting an unbearable defeat weeks later, when a zillion proprietors, all reading from the same script, flatly stated: "Gee, I dunno nothin' about it, Son. If ya don't see it there, we didn't get it in." Don, what rose up in me upon each of these unfortunate occasions was a case of "Malice by Fluorescent Light," and the consequences for my actions crossed my mind as I thought what would happen "Once you slay the Shop-Keeper." Seriously, I was very upset about the absence of JUNGLE ACTION #10 from my stack of that month's Marvels, and I'm going to do my best to lay my hands on it somehow in the very near future.

JUNGLE ACTION #11 contained all the elements so carefully meshed that have made the Black Panther's series one of the finest at Marvel. Don, once again, your characterizations of the entire Panther-cast were so clearly defined, I honestly felt as if I knew them. From the false bravado of Tayete to the overly indulgent self-pity of Monica, you have unobtrusively helped advance the cause of the Negro far more than the melodramatic "relevancy" of Marvel's competitors that was big a few years ago. By not emphasizing the fact that every individual yet shown in this series has been Black, the reader has come to empathize, sympathize, and just simply view them as people. Over the past several months, we have seen the inner workings of an all-Black society, with its customs, conflicts, and yes, prejudices. And not so much as once, have I felt a distance between this group and myself because of skin color differences. This is a society every bit as troubled as our own; and in placing emphasis on those problems common to all men of every race, you have made this strip more relevant and meaningful than any of the "with-it" self-conscious attempts at racial brotherhood many other comics have tried.

The way men react and prepare for war is a topic that's been the theme of so many books, yet it was given such a personal touch through the differing reactions of Taku and W'Kabi, after they'd slayed the *metaphorical dragon.* You continue to make the story worthwhile reading, Don, simply from the standpoint of those probing captions of yours. What I found interesting was that at no time did you take a position concerning the "necessity" of the raid or not, it simply was, and men will inevitably be changed by it and stained. War does appear to be a constant of life wherever it appears, and while Killraven is trying to "win back humanity's right to destroy itself," the Panther and company seem to be making efficient usage of that "right."

One other thing: please keep guest stars from other mags out of this series, because as you've presented Wakanda to us, it appears to be a self-contained world within a world, and I like that, immensely. I know it's part of the Marvel Universe, but it's a special part, like the Savage Land or Asgard, and I hope it remains such as long as you're doing the scripting.

It's time for some comments about this issue's art. Billy Graham, after panning, and I feel rightfully so, your artwork on "GABRIEL—DEVIL HUNTER" in THE HAUNT OF HORROR, I was more than pleased with the way you did the pencilling, and especially the panel layouts on JUNGLE ACTION #11. Pages 14 and 15 were marvelously atmospheric, and I love those frame-by-frame type panel arrangements on those pages; keep them coming. And page 26 was simply a masterpiece of movement and emotion, that would have been marred by words. Stan Lee once said in the pages of TALES OF SUSPENSE, "The wise man knoweth when to speak, and when to shutteth up;" evidently Don is a wise man. It's obvious there was exceptionally close collaboration between you and Don, and this guy just seems to bring out the best in any artist, or so I've noticed.

Looking at the "next issue" section of this issue's letters page, it doesn't take a Hodiah Twist to tell that next issue is going to be another biggie. There's something wonderful about sitting down on a rainy afternoon and re-reading all the previous Panther adventures in JUNGLE ACTION, knowing that this isn't a part of the past, something already complete, but is only the bare beginnings of something I hope will continue to be produced for many years to come by the same people doing it now. Oh, and before I forget, I did try to get a hold of a wooden W'Kabi, but you were right, Sears Roebuck was out of them. No shortage of Taku philosophy dolls, though, so I bought two of them, but the fortune-cookie philosophy I got from one of them when I pulled that little string was so putrid I threw it away. I mean I heard stuff like "And as the winds of the world whip through the winding willows, wonder, when it will bring to mind, the wide-open seam in the seat of your trousers." Ahh, but this other doll gave to me a lifelong philosophy embodied in three simple words it repeated each time I pulled the string, it said "Hang in there," so I will. Hang in there, yourself.

RALPH MACCHIO
188 Wilson Drive
Cresskill, N.J. 07626

Ah, Ralph, what can we say after a beautiful critique like that? Words pale, nay, they are rendered naught but meaningless, swept away unto the far-flung reaches of infinity where Taku philosophy dolls are laid to their final rest, nevermore to speak of tranquil trolls and meaningful trivia . . . unless they are repossessed by Sears Roebuck and called back to duty with a new set of programming tapes.

Who says absurdity does not abound within these pages?

Anyhow, by now you should have a copy of JUNGLE ACTION #10. Don just couldn't bear the thought of one of Panther's Rage's most astute critics not having the entire set . . . and your end comments about rainy afternoons strikes a responsive chord deep in *his* past when he felt much the same way about Jim Steranko's Shield opuses. That you have such sentiment for this series, as well as many of you other Marvel letter writers, is not only gratifying but sobering.

We sincerely hope we can continue to deserve your trust. It's your responses, People, *all* of you, that have made the efforts that have gone into this book worthwhile. It means the time has been well spent. We hope you'll continue to feel *your time* was well spent while reading future issues.

Dear Don, Rich, Klaus, Roy, Gil & everyone else behind the Panther,

Thank you for at long last letting us see the real Black Panther.

This great character has finally been shown for his real value. Don McGregor has captured Wakanda and its chieftain nearly flawlessly. I particularly enjoy the way he is showing the all too real clash of modern technology with the Wakandas old way of life, with the Panther caught in the middle.

JUNGLE ACTION #9 was just another great example of a series which is going to the top. The Panther is truly a unique man. In this mag he is seperate from all your other heroes. I am not saying Don is perfect. He seems to have the common fault of making his captions too wordy, but all of his characters are real flesh and blood people, not stereotyped caricatures. I notice that he is introducing a whole stack of characters in these last few issues. This reminds one of Kirby's D.C. work or Starlin's magnificent CAPTAIN MARVEL.

I doubt if my letter will be printed because of the time lag we suffer in Australia. If a comic is a May cover date issue, that's when we get it. . . May.

MARK A.P. MULLER
Flat 2, 8 Grafton St.
East Ipswich, Queensland,
4305. Australia.

There is a brain boggling aspect to this business, Mark, in that we often don't realize just how vast a readership follows our titles. We're flattered that our book relates to you in a personal way. . . and we don't think distance will stop you from having a letter published.

Of course, we could be wrong. The only way you'll ever know for sure is to keep writing us letters and sooner or later you're bound to get one printed. So keep on trying. Better luck next time.

Dear Don, Billy, and Klaus:

I'm often hesitant to give praise to anything, due mostly to a rather cynical nature, especially when my old love, Marvel Comics, is involved. I realize that you get a lot of flak from worshippers of the "old Marvel of the 1960's," but I have to go with the ones that want Marvel to go on ahead into new fields and different, excitingly new concepts. But, as I said, I'm a bit cynical, and have therefore seen few things recently to fit the bill. Oh, of course WARLOCK came close, and MAN-THING is really unique from most anything else on the market. And then again, even through my skepticism, I feel tremendously pleased by the most enjoyable, thought-provoking, and well-written titles that I've ever been privileged to read. I'm talking, of course, about the Black Panther series in JUNGLE ACTION; I intend *not* to merely praise idly, however, and so offer the following comments, and a most surprising conclusion.

First, as it must be in anything McGregor writes, the scripting and plotting can go ahead and take their place along side Stan Lee's most classic FANTASTIC FOUR's, whatever you conceive them to be. Tight characterizations, believable situations, and most of all, that oh-so-intangible quality of down-to-earth plausibility, or rather, a very subtle *relevance* (and *not* the kind of stuff that some competitors try to pan off on us as same). He has, it seems, a very good rapport between his artists, as each of them have produced works that, while not their usual styles, seem to flow, and even become as *one* with the words. The three different artists are so different in their own natures (the "larger-than-life" realism of Buckler, the very classical sketchiness of a Picasso-like Kane, and the less professionalized diamond-in-the-rough flavor of Graham); and yet, they all turned in beautiful jobs much alike and some of their best (most especially for the fantastic and surprisingly job by Billy Graham recently). McGregor's style can readily be noted just by the artwork. That, and the WAR OF THE WORLDS series, show just how good a comic book can be, just what "comic art" is.

My last note, as I said, should raise an eyelid. All the things I've said about Black Panther, how there's characterization, good artist/writer communication, believabliity—all those are marks of this most 1970's-ish comic, true. . . but they're also, curiously enough, the same things that made Marvel of the 1960's so very successful, made it have so many followers, and made a lot of people, if not rich, then creatively reknowed. I hope that's something to think about.

FRANK S. LOVECE
947 Maple Dr.
Morgantown, W. Va. 26505

Your note raised more than an eyelid, Frank. It raised our egos, our hairlines. . . just about everything except our salaries.

"Panther's Rage" has been graced with some very fine artists as you've noted, and all of them have been a pleasure to work with. While many of Don's plots offer methods of visual presentation (which may or may not be utilized or may be embellished upon by the artist), much of the consistency in the art was due to Klaus Janson's fine inks.

As you've no doubt noticed by this time, Klaus did not ink this segment of "Panther's Rage!" much to Don and Klaus' disappointment. Klaus had other commitments to meet . . . "and miles to go before I sleep," as Robert Frost once put it. Fortunately, Craig Russell (with whom Don has been working closely on WAR OF THE WORLDS) had just finished coloring Killraven's latest epic and had a few spare nights to battle the deadline doom of JUNGLE ACTION #13. Even as this letters page is being writ by the mysterious moving hand, Craig continues to race valiantly against the consuming time factor as it threatens to devour him with. . .

Ooops! We almost forgot this was the letters page. The mysterious moving hand sometimes has lapses of memory.

Anyhow, thanks, Frank, and now everyone out in Marveldom can consider your words and add their thoughts to the subject. Onward!

Dear Don, Billy, Klaus, Artie, Glynis, and Roy:

Hmmm. . .

Another exciting JUNGLE ACTION. When will it end?

Consider: Don has been really cooking recently in AMAZING ADVENTURES, but when you come down to it, the only thing that seems to be lacking in each episode of "Panther's Rage!" is a Wakanda dateline. In a way, Wakanda is more real than Marvel-style New York.

Consider: the characters that populate this strip. They are some of the most alive, human supporting characters any strip has been blessed with. . . complete with edges, ideals, loves and emotions. . . complete with human blindness (the lack of wisdom) and the hates and bigotries that even the best of us find tainting our personalities. The W'Kabi- Taku- T'Challa - interactions are more important, more interesting, than the Civil War itself. It is the scars that war can leave on a man's soul that are at issue here.

Concerning the art, I feel that Billy is a more apt replacement for Rich as penciller of the Panther. Don's writing seems very cinematic in conception, so a cinematic approach to the art cannot be other than fitting. It would be interesting to see Steranko do an issue. Billy's layouts are just beautiful. The Taku-Karnaj "show-down" could have become hackneyed, but just look at it. Don also demonstrated his complete mastery of the use of captions in this scene. . . he not only writes great captions, but he

knows when they're not needed.

My only complaint is Karnaj's sonic disruptors. There is a basic misconception involved here. Light waves and sound waves are totally different in nature. Light waves are transverse, whereas sound waves are pressure waves and thus are longitudinal. An analogy would be like confusing latitude for longitude. Anyway, you simply can't get the same kind of laser effect out of a sound wave. Lasers are coherent light, whereas the sound phenomena is a pure tone, like Middle G for example. Anyway, even if present scientific theory is wrong (and this is pretty basic, fundamental stuff) you would have a totally different design problem involved ...the heart of the sonic disruptor would be a parabolic reflector shaped something like Klaw's hand. Those thin, rod-like barrels just won't make it.

VICTOR I. PEI
104 Riveredge Road
Bergenfield, N.J. 07621

You'd better not tell Killmonger or Karnaj that or they'll fire one of those rod-like barrels in your direction. If you're right, you've got nothing to worry about. Anyhow that mistake is nothing compared to the one Don makes in JUNGLE ACTION #12 and which will, most probably, come to light in the next letters page of JUNGLE ACTION. Good Lord, can we stand it? Suspense even on the letters page! Will it never end?

As for working with Jim Steranko, Don would like nothing better, but the elusive Mr. Steranko is involved in so many of his own projects that it's doubtful that such an event will occur any time soon, if ever. If you haven't seen a copy of MEDIASCENE Jim suggests you find one, post-haste. Isn't it awful what old friends will do for each other?

We hope the further developments with W'Kabi and Monica in this issue continued to flesh out our supporting cast and only wish there had been more room to devote to them.

And now it looks like we've collided with that little yellow box.

NEXT ISSUE: "There Are Serpents Hidden In Paradise!" T'Challa doesn't even have time to climb into a new costume as he trails Killmonger, Cadaver and the rest of his enemy's crew into Serpent Valley. We'll lay it on the line. If you thought the wolf fight in last issue or the gorilla battle in this ish were something, you're not gonna believe your eyes when T'Challa is faced with a devastating menace from beyond time. "Panther's Rage!" rapidly approaches its titanic denouement, and it'll erupt right onto these very pages, before your astonished eyes. How's that for some hype-type lingo? And for all of you who have been clamoring for some more of the venomous Venomm, he's back... along with Taku, Monica...and more startling developments in W'Kabi's private life. Face it! This one you're not gonna want to miss.

Until then...hang in there!

THIS IS IT! YOUR

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE!
CLIP 'EM AND
COLLECT 'EM!

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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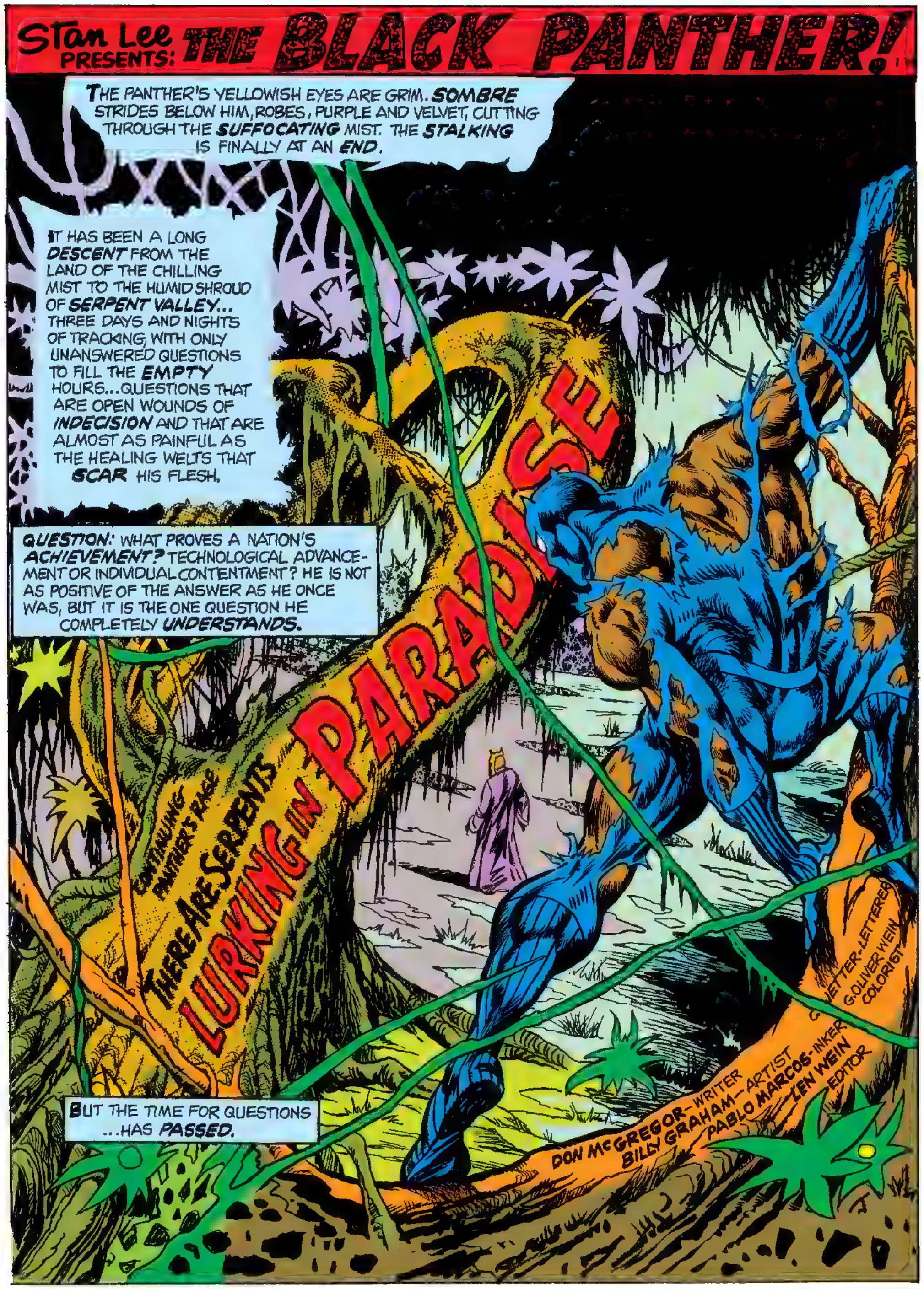
02161
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
SEE T'CHALLA BATTLE AS NEVER BEFORE AGAINST THE BEHEMOTHS FROM BEYOND TIME!
THERE ARE SERPENTS IN PARADISE
AND THEY'RE NOT JUST YOUR EVERYDAY GARTER SNAKES!



Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!
THE PANTHER'S YELLOWISH EYES ARE GRIM. SOMBRE STRIDES BELOW HIM, ROBES, PURPLE AND VELVET, CUTTING THROUGH THE SUFFOCATING MIST. THE STALKING IS FINALLY AT AN END.
IT HAS BEEN A LONG DESCENT FROM THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST TO THE HUMID SHROUD OF SERPENT VALLEY... THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF TRACKING, WITH ONLY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS TO FILL THE EMPTY HOURS...QUESTIONS THAT ARE OPEN WOUNDS OF INDECISION AND THAT ARE ALMOST AS PAINFUL AS THE HEALING WELTS THAT SCAR HIS FLESH.
QUESTION: WHAT PROVES A NATION'S ACHIEVEMENT? TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE-MENT OR INDIVIDUAL CONTENTMENT? HE IS NOT AS POSITIVE OF THE ANSWER AS HE ONCE WAS, BUT IT IS THE ONE QUESTION HE COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDS.
CONTINUING PANTHER'S RAGE
THERE ARE SERPENTS LURKING IN PARADISE
BUT THE TIME FOR QUESTIONS ...HAS PASSED.
DON McGREGOR-WRITER
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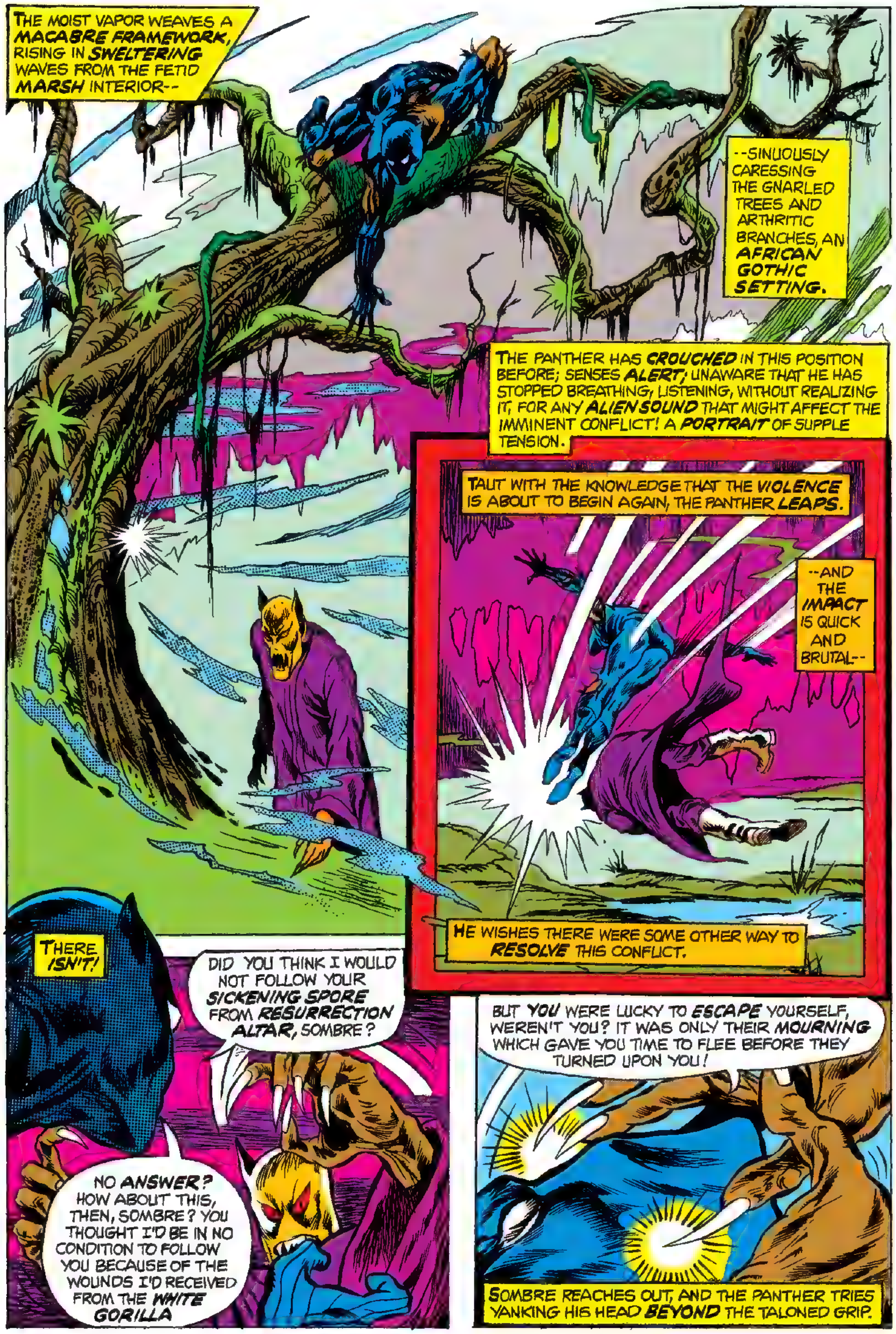
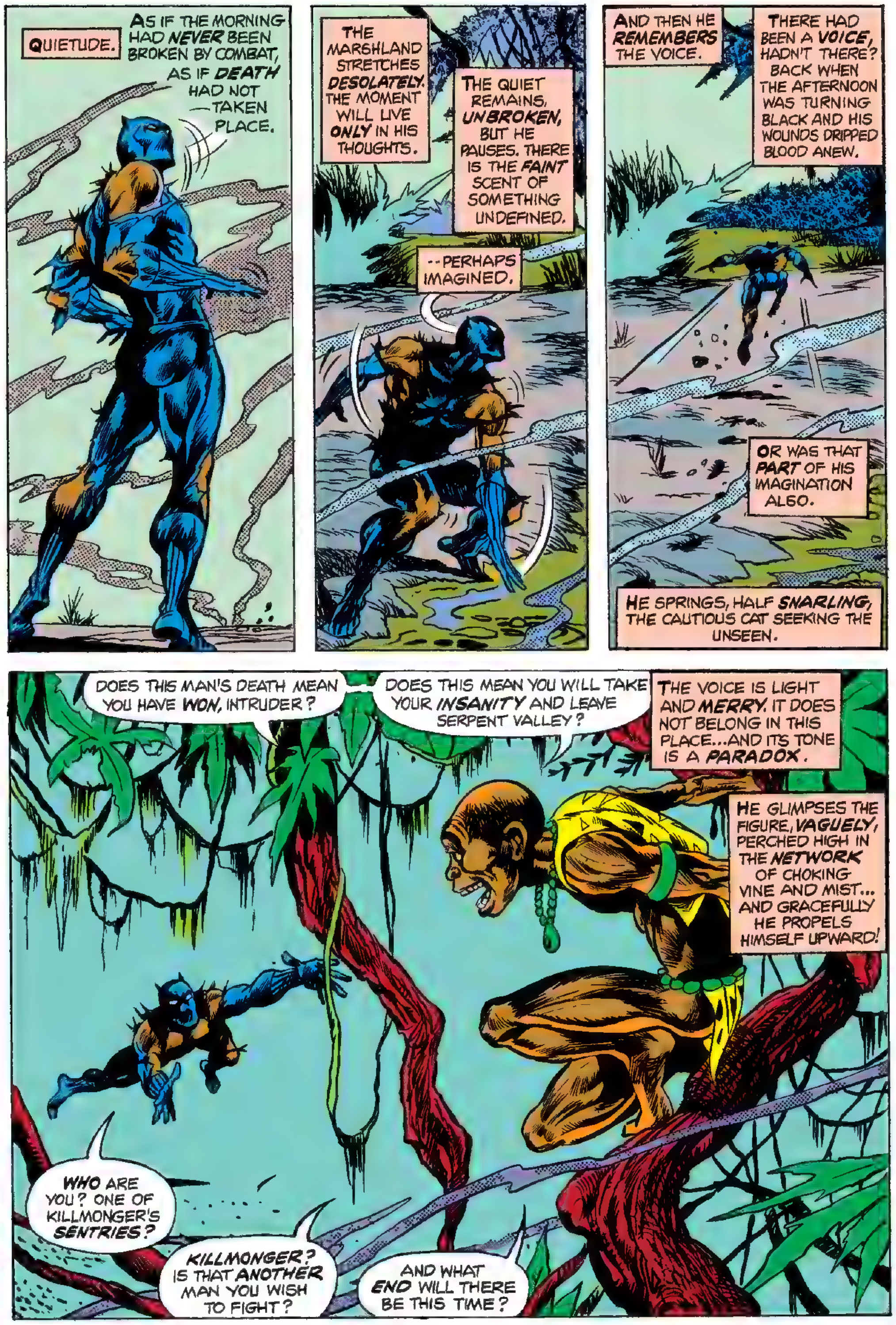
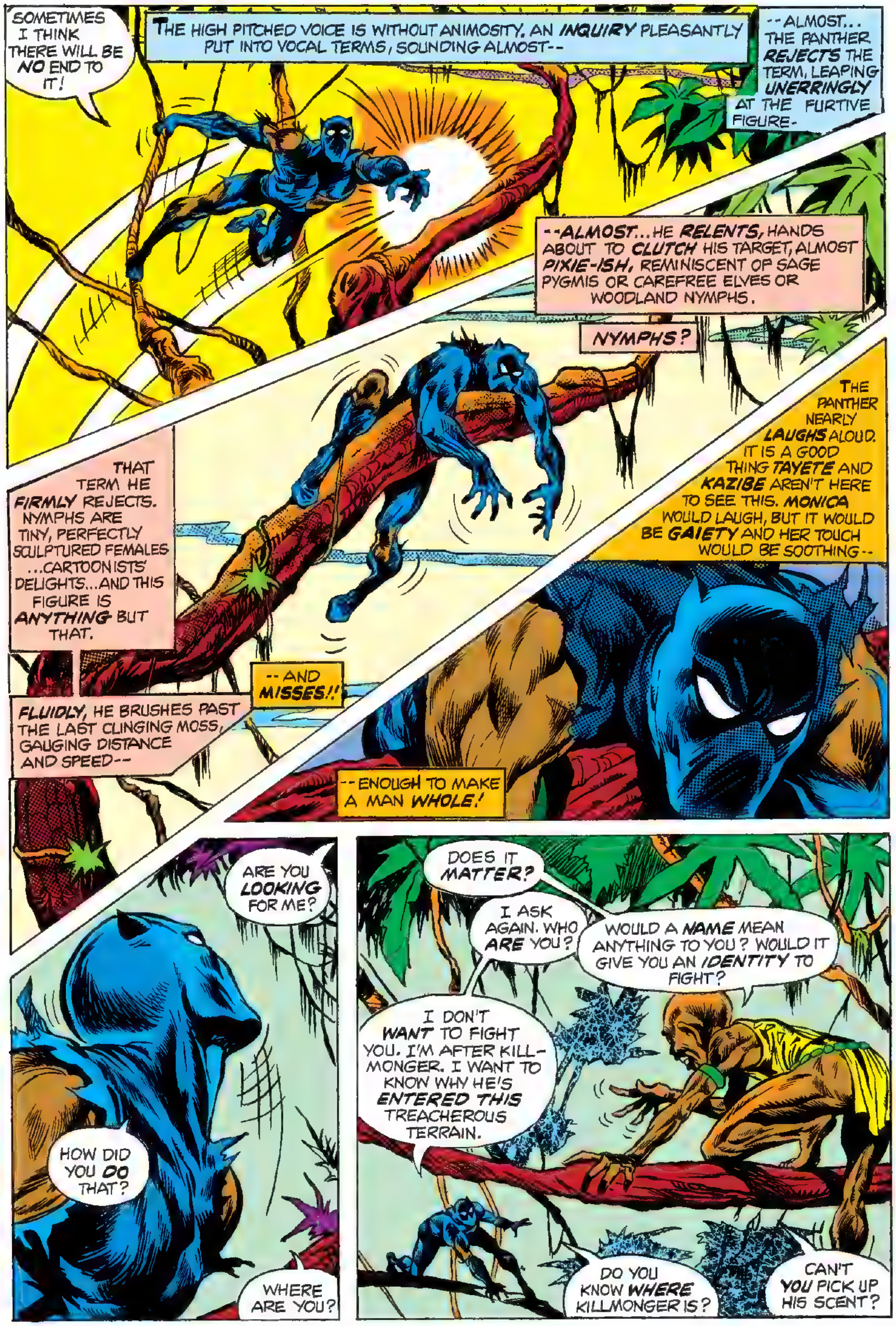


THE MOIST VAPOR WEAVES A MACABRE FRAMEWORK, RISING IN SWELTERING WAVES FROM THE FETID MARSH INTERIOR--
--SINUOUSLY CARESSING THE GNARLED TREES AND ARTHRITIC BRANCHES, AN AFRICAN GOTHIC SETTING.
THE PANTHER HAS CROUCHED IN THIS POSITION BEFORE; SENSES ALERT; UNAWARE THAT HE HAS STOPPED BREATHING, LISTENING, WITHOUT REALIZING IT, FOR ANY ALIEN SOUND THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE IMMINENT CONFLICT! A PORTRAIT OF SUPPLE TENSION.
TAUT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE VIOLENCE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN AGAIN, THE PANTHER LEAPS.
--AND THE IMPACT IS QUICK AND BRUTAL--
HE WISHES THERE WERE SOME OTHER WAY TO RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT.
THERE ISN'T!
DID YOU THINK I WOULD NOT FOLLOW YOUR SICKENING SPORE FROM RESURRECTION ALTAR, SOMBRE?
NO ANSWER? HOW ABOUT THIS, THEN, SOMBRE? YOU THOUGHT I'D BE IN NO CONDITION TO FOLLOW YOU BECAUSE OF THE WOUNDS I'D RECEIVED FROM THE WHITE GORILLA
BUT YOU WERE LUCKY TO ESCAPE YOURSELF, WEREN'T YOU? IT WAS ONLY THEIR MOURNING WHICH GAVE YOU TIME TO FLEE BEFORE THEY TURNED UPON YOU!
SOMBRE REACHES OUT, AND THE PANTHER TRIES YANKING HIS HEAD BEYOND THE TALONED GRIP.

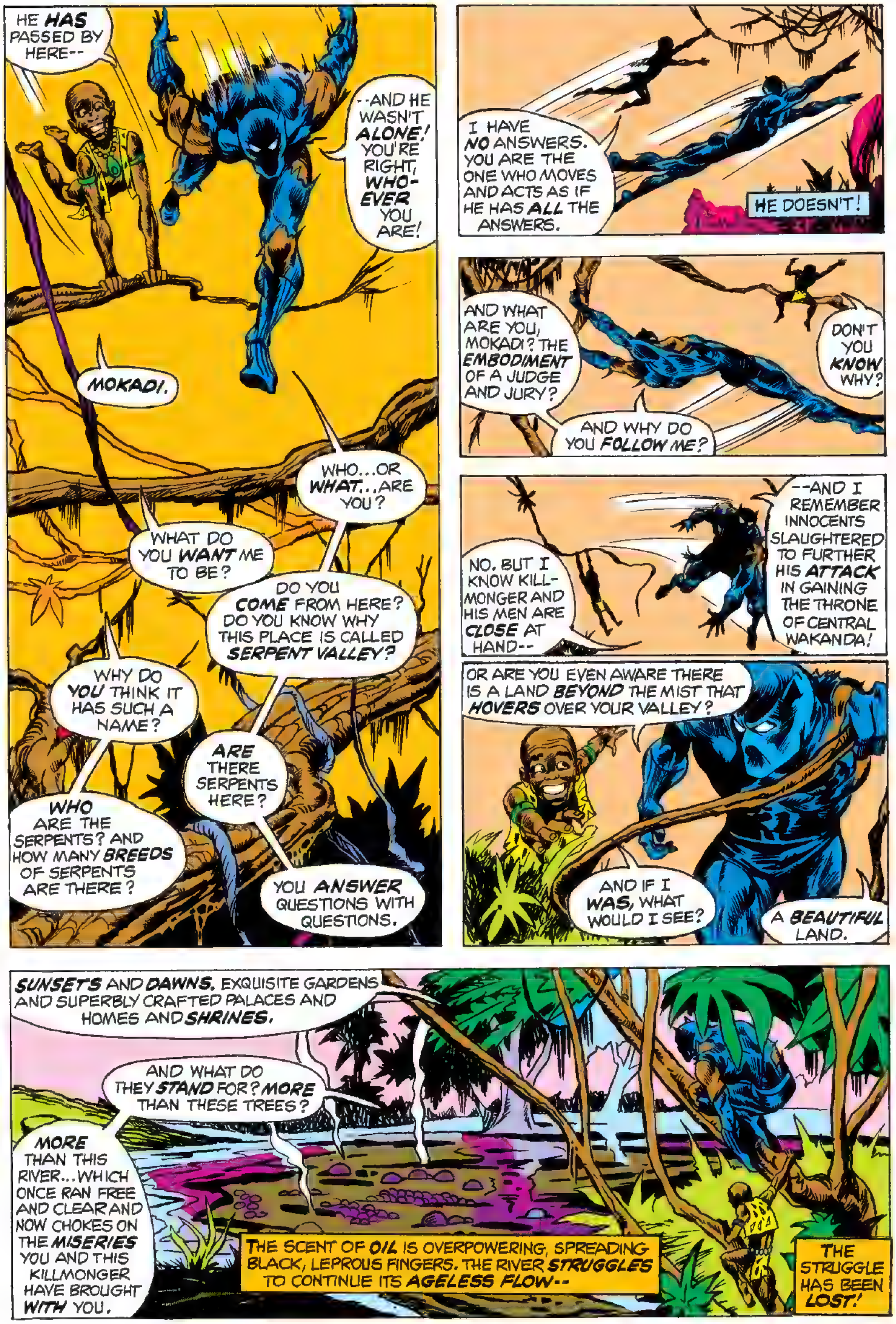
--BUT FAILS!
FINGERS, BLISTERED AND TALONED, TIGHTEN ABOUT HIS THROAT, AND THE TOUCH OF THAT MOULDERING FLESH IS ACIDITIC--
--BURNING THE SOFT TISSUE OF THE PANTHER'S THROAT!
SWEAT DRIPS INTO THE PANTHER'S EYES, MOMENTARILY BLINDING HIM!
DON'T PANIC!
DON'T PANIC! SOME DISTANT MIND-ECHO CRIES WHILE HE LUNGES UPWARD INTO SOMBRE'S CHEST CAVITY.
THERE IS HARDLY ANY RESISTANCE, AS IF BENEATH THE ROBES, SOMBRE IS THE CONSISTENCY OF DAMP CORPSE-ASH!
A MOAN ESCAPES THE PANTHER'S LIPS, THE BLACK CAT RELUCTANTLY GIVING VOICE TO ITS PAIN--
--FOR THE TORN FLESH WHICH HAS BEEN HEALING TEARS APART--
AGONIZINGLY!
KILLING A WHITE GORILLA SHOULD HAVE BEEN TANTAMOUNT TO KILLING A RELIGIOUS BELIEF.
BUT YOU HAVE NO TIME LEFT FOR THEOLOGICAL CRISES, PANTHER.
YOU SHOULD HAVE RETURNED TO THE SAFETY OF CENTRAL WAKANDA WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE--
WHERE YOUR LOVED ONES COULD HAVE CONVINCED YOU OF YOUR WORTH.
INSTEAD, YOU WILL DIE HERE, PANTHER--
--AND NONE OF YOUR FOLLOWERS WILL EVER FIND YOUR REMAINS!
SOMBRE DOES NOT HAVE TO SUCK BLOOD WITH ANY VAMPIRIC COMPULSION. HE IS NOT A VAMPIRE IN THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE WORD.
HE HAS MERELY THE ABILITY TO DRINK BLOOD, HIS HUMANITY REDUCED TO CINDERS BENEATH THE VIBRANT RAYS OF HIS SHRINE... RESURECTION ALTAR.

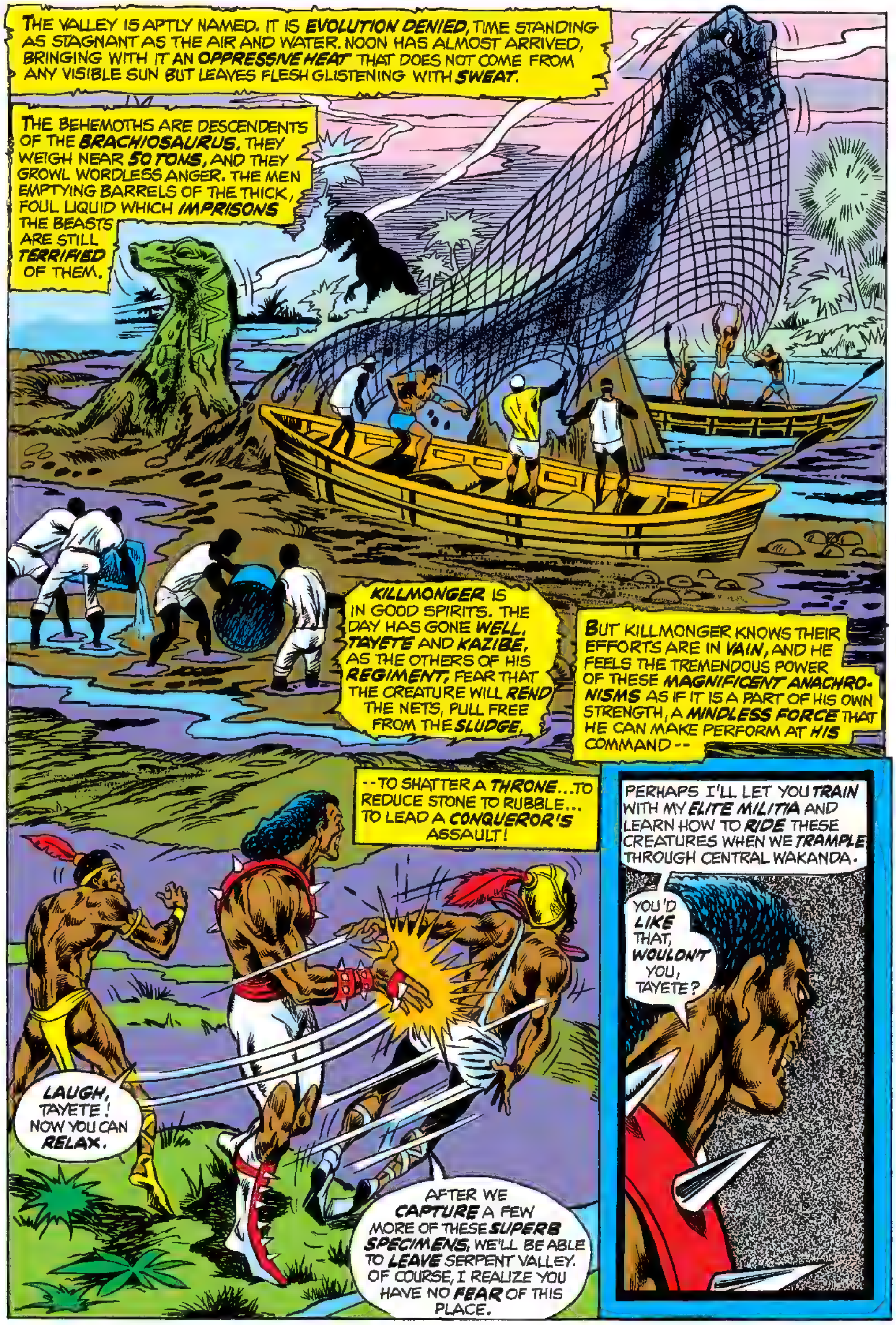
THE TEETH PUNCTURE HIS NECK, RENDING; AND THE MORNING MIST DIMS...AFTERNOON IS BLACK... AND NIGHT WILL NEVER ARRIVE!
WHY ARE YOU TWO FIGHTING?
IF YOU ARE HARDLY MORE THAN STRANGERS--
--WHY DO YOU BATTLE AS IF YOU HAVE WAGED THIS WAR ALL YOUR LIVES?
A QUESTION? DID HE ASK IT? WAS IT A QUESTION DIMLY REMEMBERED FROM EARLY MORN HOURS?
OR HAD THE MIST BEEN GIVEN VOICE? WAS IT A WIND OF LAMENT, A DIRGE FOR SENSELESS DEATH... AND PURPOSELESS LIFE?
WHATEVER... SOMBRE IS DISTRACTED.
YOU CAME TO THIS HELLISH PLACE, SOMBRE--
YOU CAME HERE TO FIND KILLMONGER, TO TELL HIM I DID NOT DIE AT THE FANGS OF DEVIL-WOLVES...AND THAT, SADLY, I KILLED ONE OF THE WHITE GORILLAS!
SOMBRE BECOMES SWIRLS OF PURPLE VELVET...LIKE STAINED GLASS MELTING! AND THEN HE HITS THE MARSH!
THE PANTHER GLARES AMBER HATRED. SOMBRE WOULD HAVE EMOTIONLESSLY KILLED HIM, WOULDN'T HE?
LET HIM SUFFER THE SAME FATE THEN AND TO HELL WITH HIM!
EXCEPT--
SOMBRE RETURNS THE GLARE. HIS EYES REMAIN MERCILESS AND THERE IS THE SUGGESTION OF A SMILE--
--UNNERVING ACCEPTANCE OF INEVITABLE DEATH!
THE QUAGMIRE IS A MUD GRAVE, SUCKED INTO THE MOUTH AND LUNGS SILENTLY STRANGLING.
AND MEMORIES OF THAT DAMNABLE SMILE!
THE PANTHER REACHES OUT, AND HIS WOUNDS TEAR WIDER. BLOOD RIVERS BEGIN THEIR JOURNIES.
HE IS A MAN WITH A CONSCIENCE--
--WHO KNOWS THAT DEATH IS NOT MERELY POETIC SLOW MOTION AND SPURTING CATCHUP.
DEATH IS INTIMATE... AND DIMINISHES ITS PERPETRATORS.

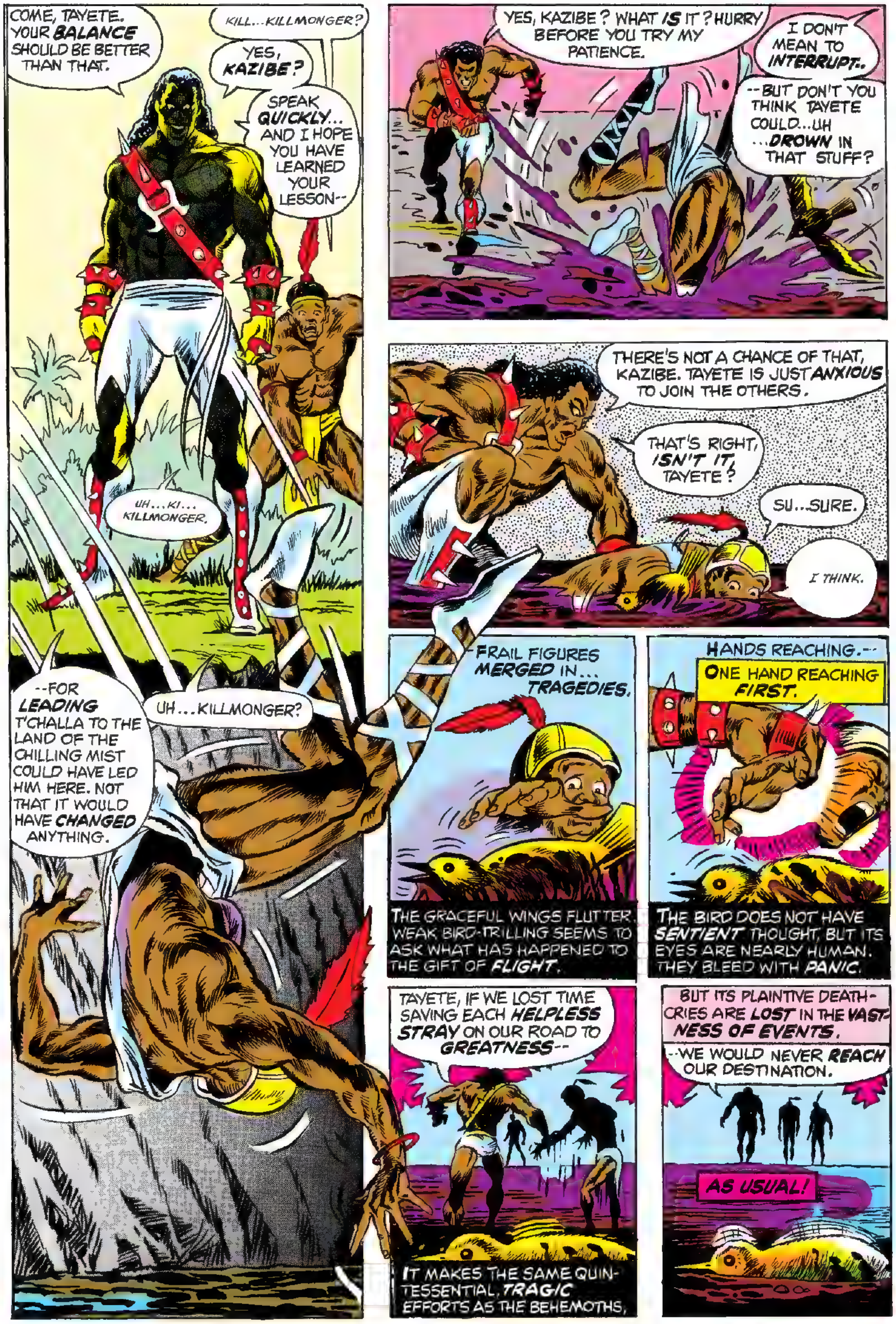

QUIETUDE.
AS IF THE MORNING HAD NEVER BEEN BROKEN BY COMBAT, AS IF DEATH HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE.
THE MARSHLAND STRETCHES DESOLATELY. THE MOMENT WILL LIVE ONLY IN HIS THOUGHTS.
THE QUIET REMAINS, UNBROKEN, BUT HE PAUSES. THERE IS THE FAINT SCENT OF SOMETHING UNDEFINED.
--PERHAPS IMAGINED.
AND THEN HE REMEMBERS THE VOICE.
THERE HAD BEEN A VOICE, HADN'T THERE? BACK WHEN THE AFTERNOON WAS TURNING BLACK AND HIS WOUNDS DRIPPED BLOOD ANEW.
OR WAS THAT PART OF HIS IMAGINATION ALSO.
HE SPRINGS, HALF SNARLING, THE CAUTIOUS CAT SEEKING THE UNSEEN.
DOES THIS MAN'S DEATH MEAN YOU HAVE WON, INTRUDER?
DOES THIS MEAN YOU WILL TAKE YOUR INSANITY AND LEAVE SERPENT VALLEY?
THE VOICE IS LIGHT AND MERRY. IT DOES NOT BELONG IN THIS PLACE...AND ITS TONE IS A PARADOX.
HE GLIMPSES THE FIGURE, VAGUELY, PERCHED HIGH IN THE NETWORK OF CHOKING VINE AND MIST... AND GRACEFULLY HE PROPELS HIMSELF UPWARD!
WHO ARE YOU? ONE OF KILLMONGER'S SENTRIES?
KILLMONGER? IS THAT ANOTHER MAN YOU WISH TO FIGHT?
AND WHAT END WILL THERE BE THIS TIME?

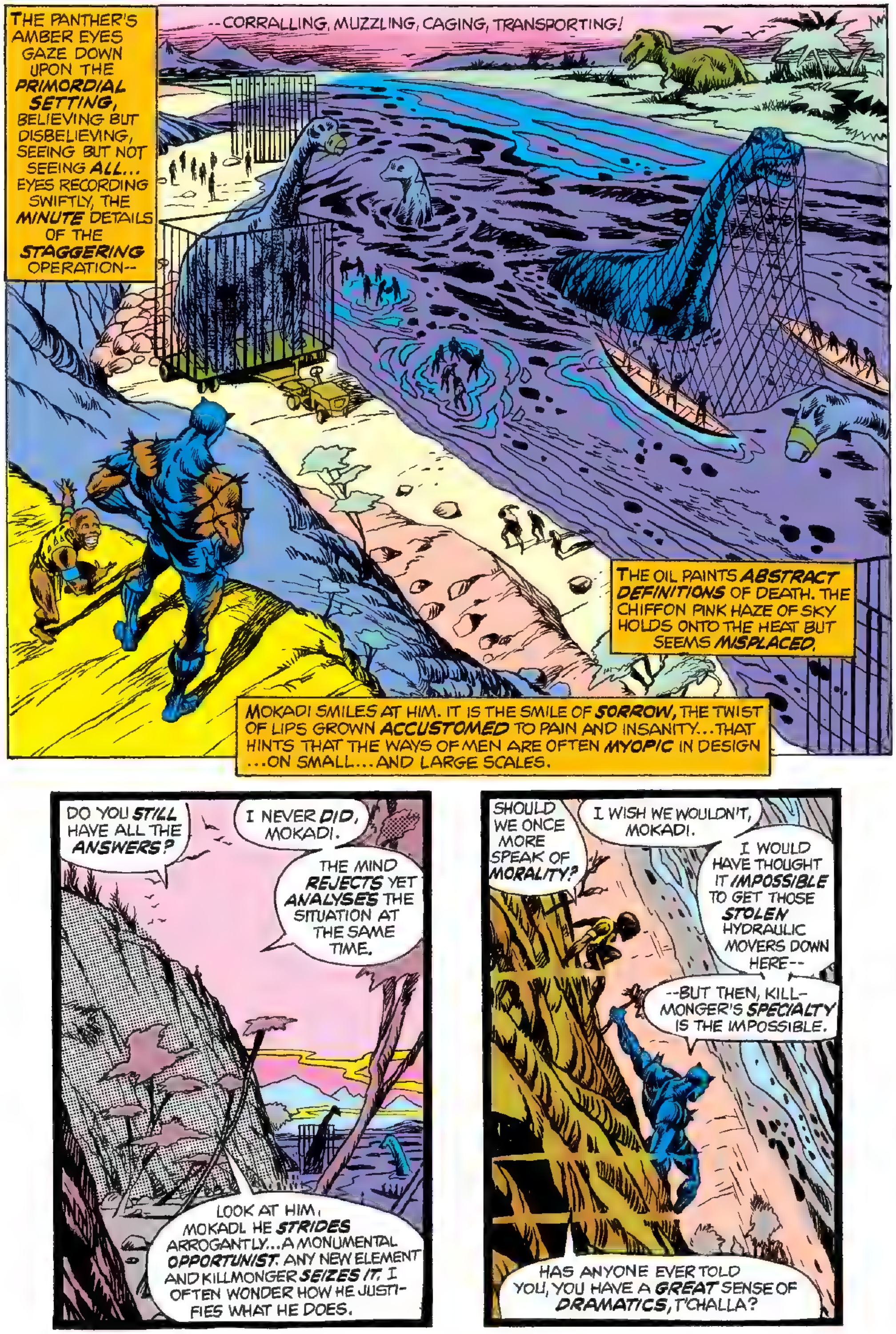


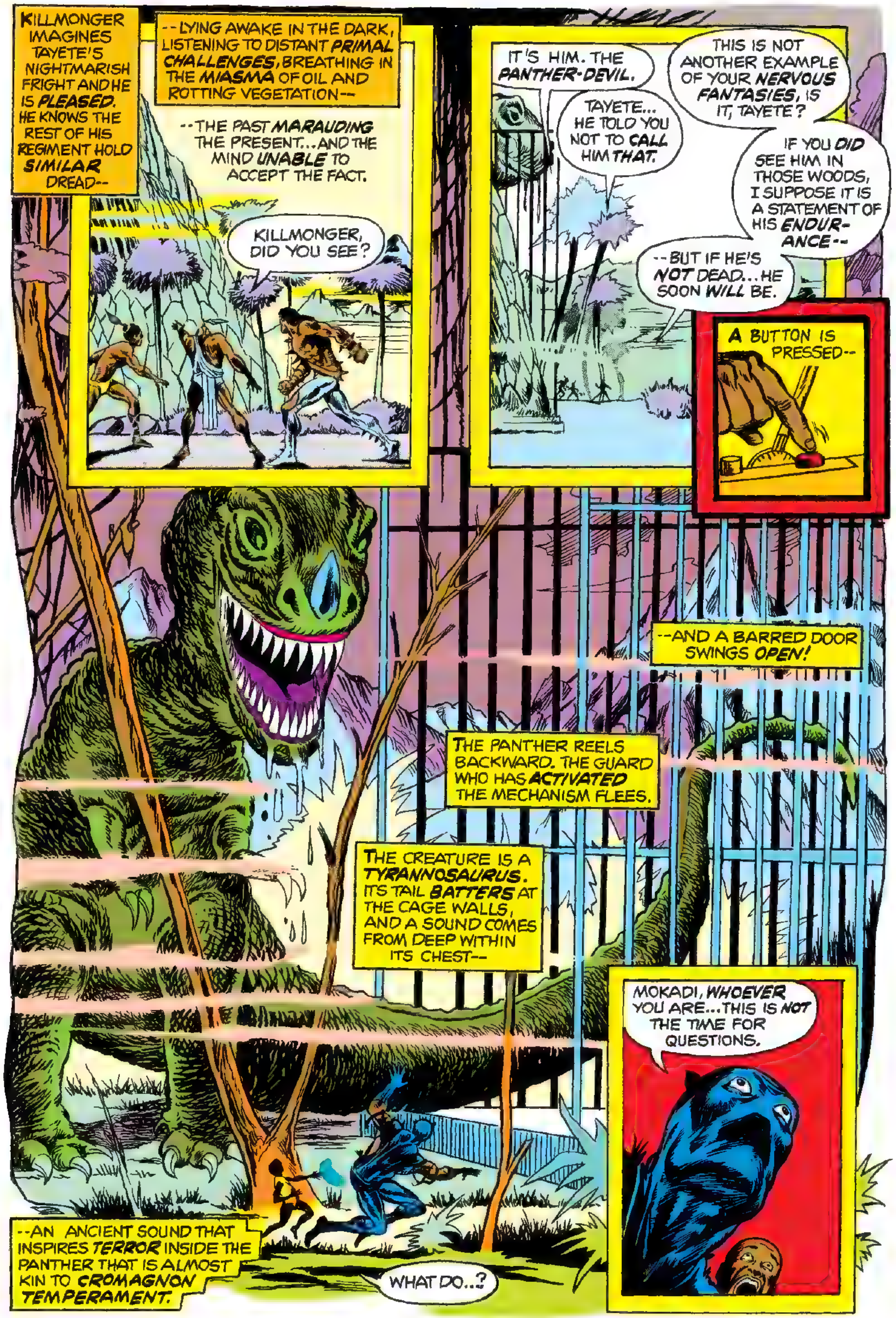
SOMETIMES I THINK THERE WILL BE NO END TO IT!
THE HIGH PITCHED VOICE IS WITHOUT ANIMOSITY, AN INQUIRY PLEASANTLY PUT INTO VOCAL TERMS, SOUNDING ALMOST--
--ALMOST... THE PANTHER REJECTS THE TERM, LEAPING UNERRINGLY AT THE FURTIVE FIGURE-
--ALMOST... HE RELENTS, HANDS ABOUT TO CLUTCH HIS TARGET, ALMOST PIXIE-ISH, REMINISCENT OF SAGE PYGMIS OR CAREFREE ELVES OR WOODLAND NYMPHS.
NYMPHS?
THAT TERM HE FIRMLY REJECTS. NYMPHS ARE TINY, PERFECTLY SCULPTURED FEMALES ...CARTOONISTS' DELIGHTS...AND THIS FIGURE IS ANYTHING BUT THAT.
--AND MISSES!!
FLUIDLY, HE BRUSHES PAST THE LAST CLINGING MOSS, GAUGING DISTANCE AND SPEED--
THE PANTHER NEARLY LAUGHS ALOUD. IT IS A GOOD THING TAYETE AND KAZIBE AREN'T HERE TO SEE THIS. MONICA WOULD LAUGH, BUT IT WOULD BE GAIETY AND HER TOUCH WOULD BE SOOTHING--
--ENOUGH TO MAKE A MAN WHOLE!
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ME?
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
WHERE ARE YOU?
DOES IT MATTER?
I ASK AGAIN. WHO ARE YOU?
WOULD A NAME MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU? WOULD IT GIVE YOU AN IDENTITY TO FIGHT?
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU. I'M AFTER KILL-MONGER. I WANT TO KNOW WHY HE'S ENTERED THIS TREACHEROUS TERRAIN.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE KILLMONGER IS?
CAN'T YOU PICK UP HIS SCENT?


HE HAS PASSED BY HERE--
--AND HE WASN'T ALONE! YOU'RE RIGHT, WHO-EVER YOU ARE!
MOKADI.
WHO...OR WHAT...ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO BE?
DO YOU COME FROM HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHY THIS PLACE IS CALLED SERPENT VALLEY?
WHY DO YOU THINK IT HAS SUCH A NAME?
ARE THERE SERPENTS HERE?
WHO ARE THE SERPENTS? AND HOW MANY BREEDS OF SERPENTS ARE THERE?
YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH QUESTIONS.
I HAVE NO ANSWERS. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO MOVES AND ACTS AS IF HE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS.
HE DOESN'T!
AND WHAT ARE YOU, MOKADI? THE EMBODIMENT OF A JUDGE AND JURY?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHY?
AND WHY DO YOU FOLLOW ME?
NO. BUT I KNOW KILL-MONGER AND HIS MEN ARE CLOSE AT HAND--
--AND I REMEMBER INNOCENTS SLAUGHTERED TO FURTHER HIS ATTACK IN GAINING THE THRONE OF CENTRAL WAKANDA!
OR ARE YOU EVEN AWARE THERE IS A LAND BEYOND THE MIST THAT HOVERS OVER YOUR VALLEY?
AND IF I WAS, WHAT WOULD I SEE?
A BEAUTIFUL LAND.
SUNSETS AND DAWNS. EXQUISITE GARDENS AND SUPERBLY CRAFTED PALACES AND HOMES AND SHRINES.
AND WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR? MORE THAN THESE TREES?
MORE THAN THIS RIVER...WHICH ONCE RAN FREE AND CLEAR AND NOW CHOKES ON THE MISERIES YOU AND THIS KILLMONGER HAVE BROUGHT WITH YOU.
THE SCENT OF OIL IS OVERPOWERING, SPREADING BLACK, LEPROUS FINGERS. THE RIVER STRUGGLES TO CONTINUE ITS AGELESS FLOW--
THE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN LOST!


THE VALLEY IS APTLY NAMED. IT IS EVOLUTION DENIED, TIME STANDING AS STAGNANT AS THE AIR AND WATER. NOON HAS ALMOST ARRIVED, BRINGING WITH IT AN OPPRESSIVE HEAT THAT DOES NOT COME FROM ANY VISIBLE SUN BUT LEAVES FLESH GLISTENING WITH SWEAT.
THE BEHEMOTHS ARE DESCENDENTS OF THE BRACHIOSAURUS, THEY WEIGH NEAR 50 TONS, AND THEY GROWL WORDLESS ANGER. THE MEN EMPTYING BARRELS OF THE THICK, FOUL LIQUID WHICH IMPRISONS THE BEASTS ARE STILL TERRIFIED OF THEM.
KILLMONGER IS IN GOOD SPIRITS. THE DAY HAS GONE WELL. TAYETE AND KAZIBE, AS THE OTHERS OF HIS REGIMENT, FEAR THAT THE CREATURE WILL REND THE NETS, PULL FREE FROM THE SLUDGE.
BUT KILLMONGER KNOWS THEIR EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN, AND HE FEELS THE TREMENDOUS POWER OF THESE MAGNIFICENT ANACHRONISMS AS IF IT IS A PART OF HIS OWN STRENGTH, A MINDLESS FORCE THAT HE CAN MAKE PERFORM AT HIS COMMAND--
--TO SHATTER A THRONE...TO REDUCE STONE TO RUBBLE...TO LEAD A CONQUEROR'S ASSAULT!
LAUGH, TAYETE! NOW YOU CAN RELAX.
AFTER WE CAPTURE A FEW MORE OF THESE SUPERB SPECIMENS, WE'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE SERPENT VALLEY. OF COURSE, I REALIZE YOU HAVE NO FEAR OF THIS PLACE.
PERHAPS I'LL LET YOU TRAIN WITH MY ELITE MILITIA AND LEARN HOW TO RIDE THESE CREATURES WHEN WE TRAMPLE THROUGH CENTRAL WAKANDA.
YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU, TAYETE?

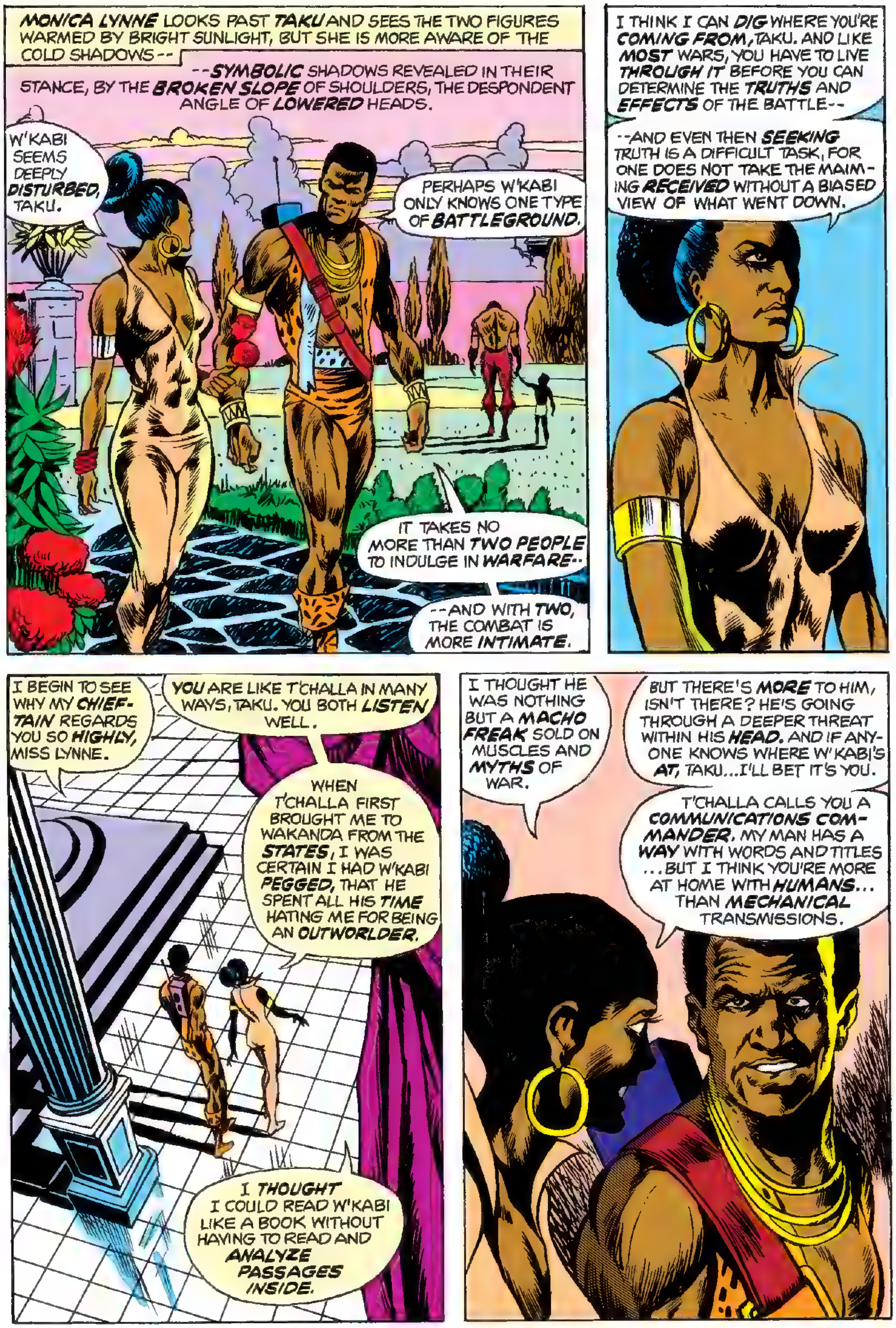

COME, TAYETE. YOUR BALANCE SHOULD BE BETTER THAN THAT.
KILL...KILLMONGER?
YES, KAZIBE?
SPEAK QUICKLY... AND I HOPE YOU HAVE LEARNED YOUR LESSON--
UH...KI... KILLMONGER.
--FOR LEADING T'CHALLA TO THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST COULD HAVE LED HIM HERE. NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE CHANGED ANYTHING.
UH...KILLMONGER?
YES, KAZIBE? WHAT IS IT? HURRY BEFORE YOU TRY MY PATIENCE.
I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT..
--BUT DON'T YOU THINK TAYETE COULD...UH ...DROWN IN THAT STUFF?
THERE'S NOT A CHANCE OF THAT, KAZIBE. TAYETE IS JUST ANXIOUS TO JOIN THE OTHERS.
THAT'S RIGHT, ISN'T IT, TAYETE?
SU...SURE.
I THINK.
FRAIL FIGURES MERGED IN... TRAGEDIES.
THE GRACEFUL WINGS FLUTTER. WEAK BIRD-TRILLING SEEMS TO ASK WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE GIFT OF FLIGHT.
HANDS REACHING.--
ONE HAND REACHING FIRST.
THE BIRD DOES NOT HAVE SENTIENT THOUGHT, BUT ITS EYES ARE NEARLY HUMAN. THEY BLEED WITH PANIC.
TAYETE, IF WE LOST TIME SAVING EACH HELPLESS STRAY ON OUR ROAD TO GREATNESS--
IT MAKES THE SAME QUINTESSENTIAL, TRAGIC EFFORTS AS THE BEHEMOTHS,
BUT ITS PLAINTIVE DEATH-CRIES ARE LOST IN THE VASTNESS OF EVENTS.
--WE WOULD NEVER REACH OUR DESTINATION.
AS USUAL!

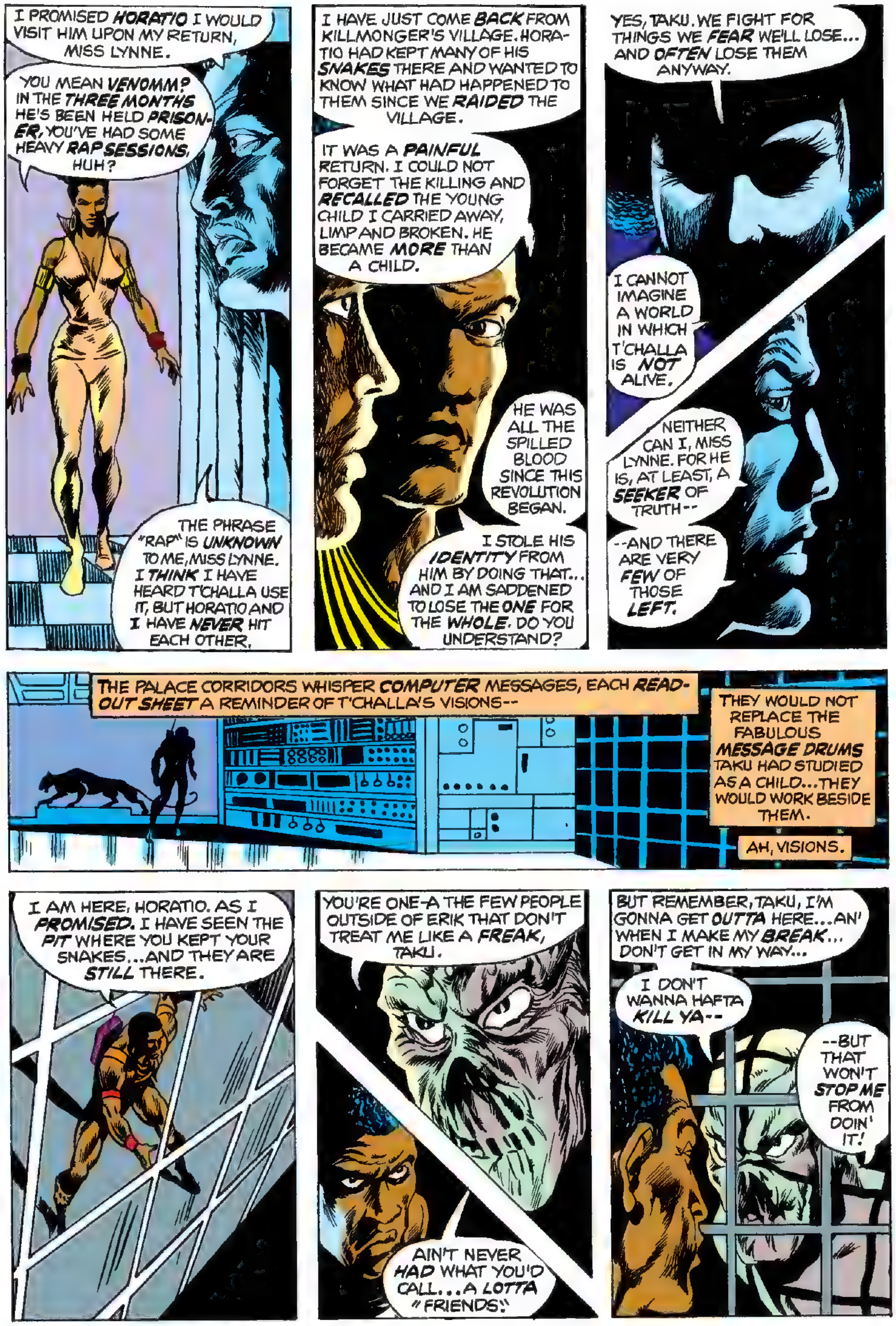

THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES GAZE DOWN UPON THE PRIMORDIAL SETTING, BELIEVING BUT DISBELIEVING, SEEING BUT NOT SEEING ALL... EYES RECORDING SWIFTLY, THE MINUTE DETAILS OF THE STAGGERING OPERATION--
--CORRALLING, MUZZLING, CAGING, TRANSPORTING!
THE OIL PAINTS ABSTRACT DEFINITIONS OF DEATH. THE CHIFFON PINK HAZE OF SKY HOLDS ONTO THE HEAT BUT SEEMS MISPLACED.
MOKADI SMILES AT HIM. IT IS THE SMILE OF SORROW, THE TWIST OF LIPS GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO PAIN AND INSANITY...THAT HINTS THAT THE WAYS OF MEN ARE OFTEN MYOPIC IN DESIGN ...ON SMALL...AND LARGE SCALES.
DO YOU STILL HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS?
I NEVER DID, MOKADI.
THE MIND REJECTS YET ANALYSES THE SITUATION AT THE SAME TIME.
LOOK AT HIM, MOKADI. HE STRIDES ARROGANTLY...A MONUMENTAL OPPORTUNIST. ANY NEW ELEMENT AND KILLMONGER SEIZES IT. I OFTEN WONDER HOW HE JUSTIFIES WHAT HE DOES.
SHOULD WE ONCE MORE SPEAK OF MORALITY?
I WISH WE WOULDN'T, MOKADI.
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THOSE STOLEN HYDRAULIC MOVERS DOWN HERE--
--BUT THEN, KILLMONGER'S SPECIALTY IS THE IMPOSSIBLE.
HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU, YOU HAVE A GREAT SENSE OF DRAMATICS, T'CHALLA?

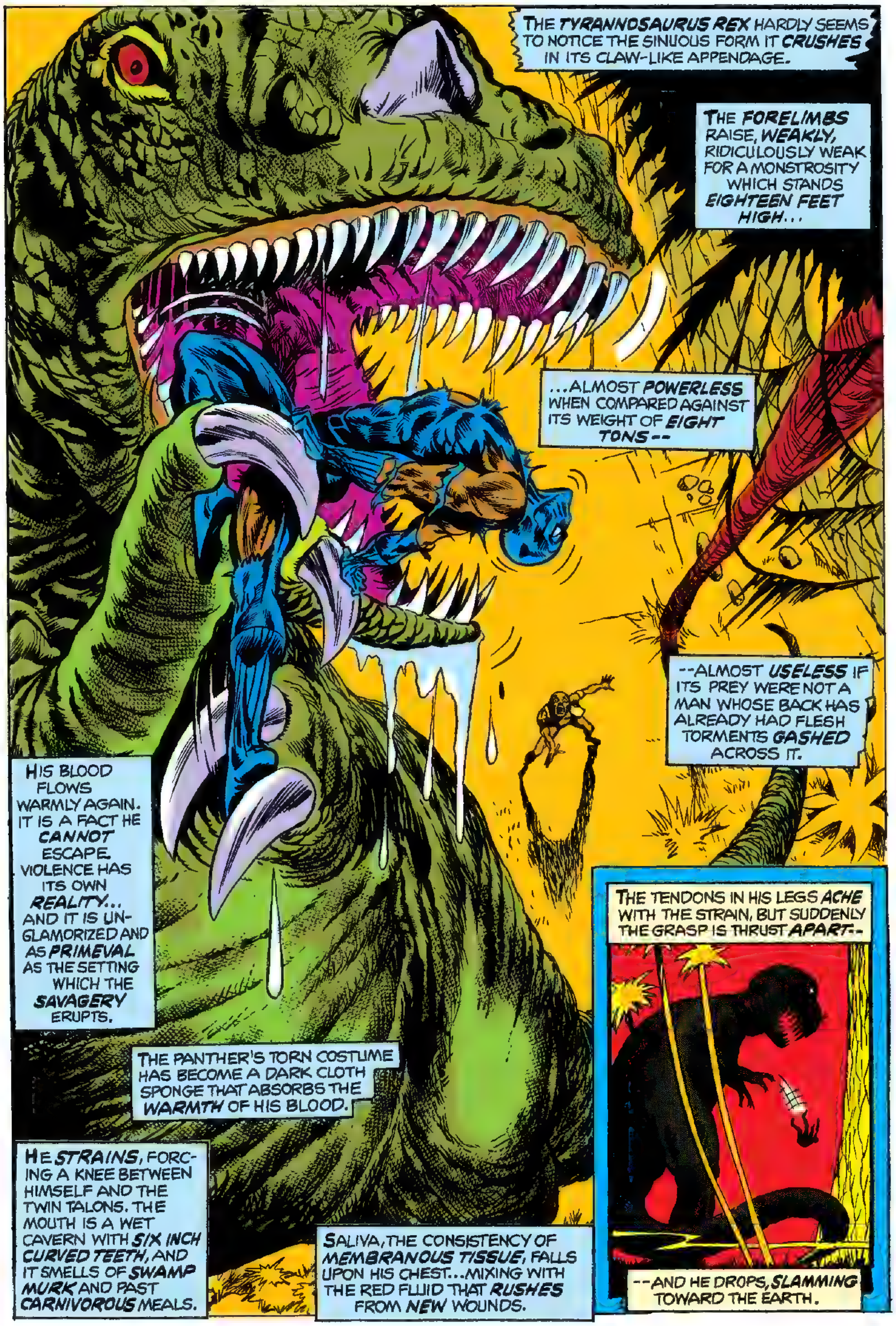


KILLMONGER IMAGINES TAYETE'S NIGHTMARISH FRIGHT AND HE IS PLEASED. HE KNOWS THE REST OF HIS REGIMENT HOLD SIMILAR DREAD--
--LYING AWAKE IN THE DARK, LISTENING TO DISTANT PRIMAL CHALLENGES, BREATHING IN THE MIASMA OF OIL AND ROTTING VEGETATION--
--THE PAST MARAUDING THE PRESENT...AND THE MIND UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE FACT.
KILLMONGER, DID YOU SEE?
IT'S HIM. THE PANTHER-DEVIL.
TAYETE... HE TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL HIM THAT.
THIS IS NOT ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF YOUR NERVOUS FANTASIES, IS IT, TAYETE?
IF YOU DID SEE HIM IN THOSE WOODS, I SUPPOSE IT IS A STATEMENT OF HIS ENDUR-ANCE--
--BUT IF HE'S NOT DEAD...HE SOON WILL BE.
A BUTTON IS PRESSED--
--AND A BARRED DOOR SWINGS OPEN!
THE PANTHER REELS BACKWARD. THE GUARD WHO HAS ACTIVATED THE MECHANISM FLEES.
THE CREATURE IS A TYRANNOSAURUS. ITS TAIL BATTERS AT THE CAGE WALLS, AND A SOUND COMES FROM DEEP WITHIN ITS CHEST--
MOKADI, WHOEVER YOU ARE...THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR QUESTIONS.
--AN ANCIENT SOUND THAT INSPIRES TERROR INSIDE THE PANTHER THAT IS ALMOST KIN TO CROMAGNON TEMPERAMENT.
WHAT DO..?

CENTRAL WAKANDA SEEMS TO BE HOLDING ITS BREATH...WAITING. TRANQUILITY TEMPLE: BLOSSOMS A DREAMER CAN TOUCH, FOUNTAINS TO GENTLY KEEP THE SILENCE FROM BECOMING OPPRESSIVE. TOUCH THE SOFT PETAL, CRUSHED RED. IT DOESN'T DRIP BLOOD, DOES IT? BRUSH THE BLUE LEAVES. THEY DO NOT WEEP.
TRANQUILITY TEMPLE: A FANTASY CONSTRUCTED INTO ARCHITECTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL REALITY.
T'CHALLA IS GONE NOW. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN BACK. BUT HE ISN'T, AND HE HAS LEFT ME IN CHARGE...TO KEEP CONTROL OF THE PRISONERS CAPTURED IN THE RAID ON KILLMONGER'S VILLAGE.
AND NOW, YOUR MOTHER AND I, LIVE IN THE SAME PLACE ...BUT ARE APART.
W'KABI LOOKS AT HIS SON KONO AND TRIES TO HOLD BACK HIS HURT. SUCH EMOTION IS NOT SUITABLE FOR ONE WHO IS HEAD OF COURT SECURITY. KONO RETURNS HIS LOOK, AND THE MISERY ENGULFS THEM BOTH...AS IF EACH WERE HOPING THE OTHER COULD SAVE THEM.
TAKU WOULD KNOW MORE OF THIS KIND OF THING THAN I. IT IS...DIFFICULT...TO LOSE HER CARING.
ONCE YOUR MOTHER AND I WERE CLOSE. I THINK THAT IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO IMAGINE.
WHEN WE FIRST MET, MY SON, WE WERE DIFFERENT PEOPLE. WE DID NOT HURL ACCUSATIONS AT EACH OTHER.
I FEEL HURT AND ANGER, MY SON, AND THEY MAKE ME DO THINGS THAT FORCE US FARTHER APART.
BUT WHAT WORDS DO YOU SAY...ARE THERE ANY WORDS TO SAY...TO SOMEONE YOU ONCE KNEW--
--WHO YOU CAN NO LONGER FREELY TOUCH--
--WHOSE WARMTH YOU HAVE LOST. DO YOU UNDERSTAND, MY SON?
I AM LOST!

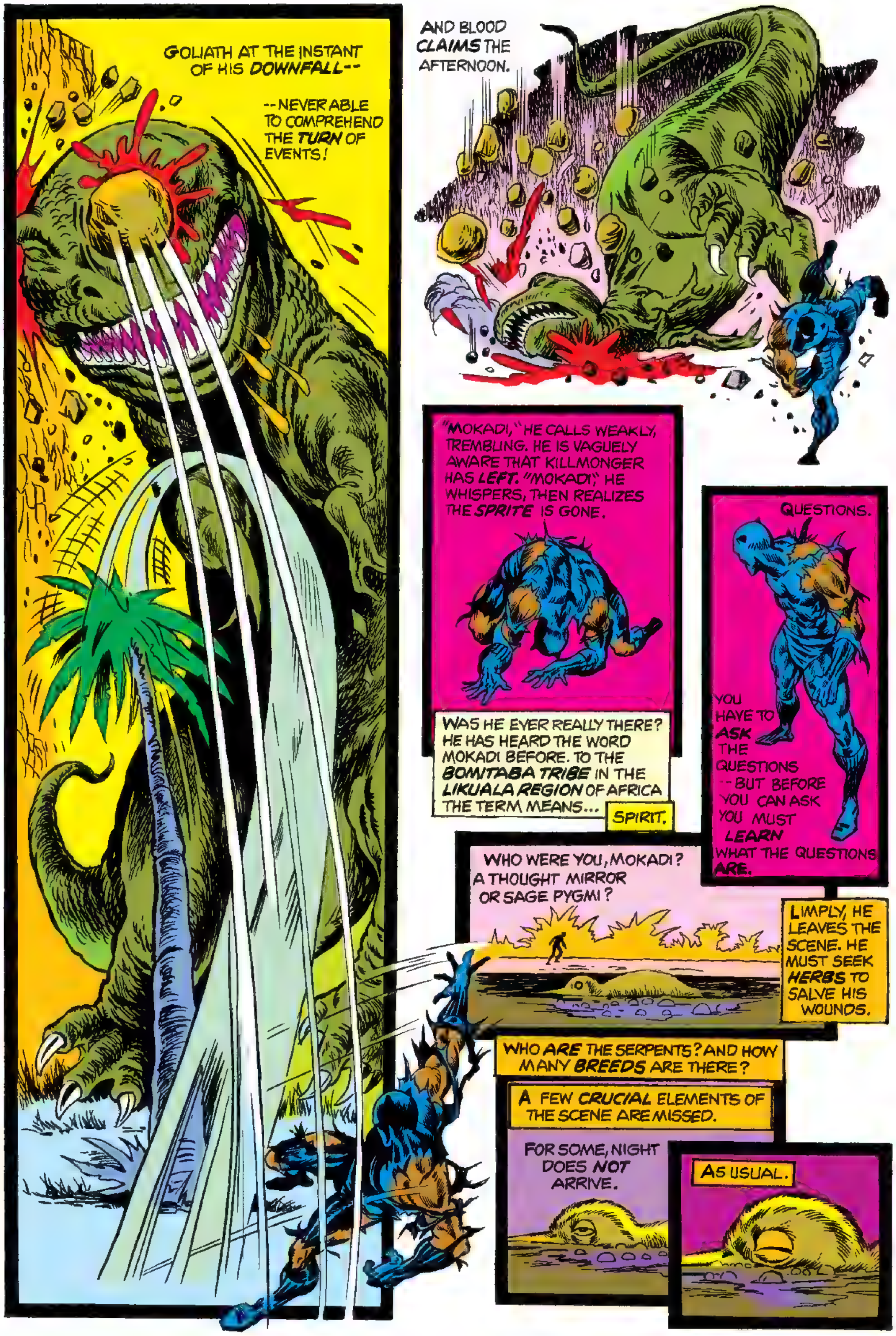

MONICA LYNNE LOOKS PAST TAKU AND SEES THE TWO FIGURES WARMED BY BRIGHT SUNLIGHT, BUT SHE IS MORE AWARE OF THE COLD SHADOWS--
--SYMBOLIC SHADOWS REVEALED IN THEIR STANCE, BY THE BROKEN SLOPE OF SHOULDERS, THE DESPONDENT ANGLE OF LOWERED HEADS.
W'KABI SEEMS DEEPLY DISTURBED, TAKU.
PERHAPS W'KABI ONLY KNOWS ONE TYPE OF BATTLEGROUND.
IT TAKES NO MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE TO INDULGE IN WARFARE--
--AND WITH TWO, THE COMBAT IS MORE INTIMATE.
I THINK I CAN DIG WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, TAKU. AND LIKE MOST WARS, YOU HAVE TO LIVE THROUGH IT BEFORE YOU CAN DETERMINE THE TRUTHS AND EFFECTS OF THE BATTLE--
--AND EVEN THEN SEEKING TRUTH IS A DIFFICULT TASK, FOR ONE DOES NOT TAKE THE MAIMING RECEIVED WITHOUT A BIASED VIEW OF WHAT WENT DOWN.
I BEGIN TO SEE WHY MY CHIEFTAIN REGARDS YOU SO HIGHLY, MISS LYNNE.
YOU ARE LIKE T'CHALLA IN MANY WAYS, TAKU. YOU BOTH LISTEN WELL.
WHEN T'CHALLA FIRST BROUGHT ME TO WAKANDA FROM THE STATES, I WAS CERTAIN I HAD W'KABI PEGGED, THAT HE SPENT ALL HIS TIME HATING ME FOR BEING AN OUTWORLDER.
I THOUGHT I COULD READ W'KABI LIKE A BOOK WITHOUT HAVING TO READ AND ANALYZE PASSAGES INSIDE.
I THOUGHT HE WAS NOTHING BUT A MACHO FREAK SOLD ON MUSCLES AND MYTHS OF WAR.
BUT THERE'S MORE TO HIM, ISN'T THERE? HE'S GOING THROUGH A DEEPER THREAT WITHIN HIS HEAD. AND IF ANYONE KNOWS WHERE W'KABI'S AT, TAKU...I'LL BET IT'S YOU.
T'CHALLA CALLS YOU A COMMUNICATIONS COMMANDER. MY MAN HAS A WAY WITH WORDS AND TITLES ...BUT I THINK YOU'RE MORE AT HOME WITH HUMANS... THAN MECHANICAL TRANSMISSIONS.


I PROMISED HORATIO I WOULD VISIT HIM UPON MY RETURN, MISS LYNNE.
YOU MEAN VENOMM? IN THE THREE MONTHS HE'S BEEN HELD PRISONER, YOU'VE HAD SOME HEAVY RAP SESSIONS, HUH?
THE PHRASE "RAP" IS UNKNOWN TO ME, MISS LYNNE. I THINK I HAVE HEARD T'CHALLA USE IT, BUT HORATIO AND I HAVE NEVER HIT EACH OTHER.
I HAVE JUST COME BACK FROM KILLMONGER'S VILLAGE. HORATIO HAD KEPT MANY OF HIS SNAKES THERE AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM SINCE WE RAIDED THE VILLAGE.
IT WAS A PAINFUL RETURN. I COULD NOT FORGET THE KILLING AND RECALLED THE YOUNG CHILD I CARRIED AWAY, LIMP AND BROKEN. HE BECAME MORE THAN A CHILD.
HE WAS ALL THE SPILLED BLOOD SINCE THIS REVOLUTION BEGAN.
I STOLE HIS IDENTITY FROM HIM BY DOING THAT... AND I AM SADDENED TO LOSE THE ONE FOR THE WHOLE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES, TAKU. WE FIGHT FOR THINGS WE FEAR WE'LL LOSE... AND OFTEN LOSE THEM ANYWAY.
I CANNOT IMAGINE A WORLD IN WHICH T'CHALLA IS NOT ALIVE.
NEITHER CAN I, MISS LYNNE. FOR HE IS, AT LEAST, A SEEKER OF TRUTH--
--AND THERE ARE VERY FEW OF THOSE LEFT.
THE PALACE CORRIDORS WHISPER COMPUTER MESSAGES, EACH READ-OUT SHEET A REMINDER OF T'CHALLA'S VISIONS--
THEY WOULD NOT REPLACE THE FABULOUS MESSAGE DRUMS TAKU HAD STUDIED AS A CHILD... THEY WOULD WORK BESIDE THEM.
AH, VISIONS.
I AM HERE, HORATIO. AS I PROMISED. I HAVE SEEN THE PIT WHERE YOU KEPT YOUR SNAKES... AND THEY ARE STILL THERE.
YOU'RE ONE-A THE FEW PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF ERIK THAT DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A FREAK, TAKU.
AIN'T NEVER HAD WHAT YOU'D CALL... A LOTTA "FRIENDS."
BUT REMEMBER, TAKU, I'M GONNA GET OUTTA HERE... AN' WHEN I MAKE MY BREAK... DON'T GET IN MY WAY...
I DON'T WANNA HAFTA KILL YA--
--BUT THAT WON'T STOP ME FROM DOIN' IT!


THE TYRANNOSAURUS REX HARDLY SEEMS TO NOTICE THE SINUOUS FORM IT CRUSHES IN ITS CLAW-LIKE APPENDAGE.
THE FORELIMBS RAISE, WEAKLY, RIDICULOUSLY WEAK FOR A MONSTROSITY WHICH STANDS EIGHTEEN FEET HIGH...
...ALMOST POWERLESS WHEN COMPARED AGAINST ITS WEIGHT OF EIGHT TONS--
--ALMOST USELESS IF ITS PREY WERE NOT A MAN WHOSE BACK HAS ALREADY HAD FLESH TORMENTS GASHED ACROSS IT.
HIS BLOOD FLOWS WARMLY AGAIN. IT IS A FACT HE CANNOT ESCAPE. VIOLENCE HAS ITS OWN REALITY... AND IT IS UN-GLAMORIZED AND AS PRIMEVAL AS THE SETTING WHICH THE SAVAGERY ERUPTS.
THE PANTHER'S TORN COSTUME HAS BECOME A DARK CLOTH SPONGE THAT ABSORBS THE WARMTH OF HIS BLOOD.
HE STRAINS, FORCING A KNEE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE TWIN TALONS. THE MOUTH IS A WET CAVERN WITH SIX INCH CURVED TEETH, AND IT SMELLS OF SWAMP MURK AND PAST CARNIVOROUS MEALS.
SALIVA, THE CONSISTENCY OF MEMBRANOUS TISSUE, FALLS UPON HIS CHEST...MIXING WITH THE RED FLUID THAT RUSHES FROM NEW WOUNDS.
THE TENDONS IN HIS LEGS ACHE WITH THE STRAIN, BUT SUDDENLY THE GRASP IS THRUST APART--
--AND HE DROPS, SLAMMING TOWARD THE EARTH.

IN MID-FLIGHT, HE EXECUTES A SUPERB SOMERSAULT--
--HITTING THE EARTH WITH AN IMPACT THAT DRIVES THE AIR OUT OF HIS LUNGS PAST SNARLING LIPS.
HIS EYES BLUR!
THE BLUR FOCUSES, AND THE BEAST IS THERE BEFORE HIM--
--AND THIS TIME IT IS AWARE OF THE TINY BLUE SPECK--
--AS IF ITS EYES HAVE ACTUALLY BECOME TRANSFIXED BY ITS MINISCULE MOVEMENTS.
HE CLAWS DESPERATELY AT THE CLIFFSIDE, TEARING HIS WOUNDS OPEN WIDER, THE BLOOD COLLECTING AT THE SMALL OF HIS BACK.
HE LOOKS PAST THE RAVENOUS MOUTH FOR SOME SIGHT OF MOKADI.
GONE.
VANISHED? AS ABRUPTLY AS HE APPEARED.
OR IS HE TRAPPED BELOW, MANGLED FLESH LEFT IN THE CREATURE'S WAKE? AND WHY DOES THE NAME MOKADI FLIRT TANTALYZINGLY AT HIS SUBCONSCIOUS, AS IF HE HAS PAST KNOWLEDGE OF ITS NAME?
RAGGED YET ELEGANT--
--TORN BUT UNIFIED--
--CLOUD AND SKY AS DISTANT WITNESSES!

HE SPRINGS INTO THE AFTERNOON AIR, AND FOR A MOMENT, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PRIMORDIAL CONFLICT ARE CAPTURED IN SPLENDID MOVEMENT--
--THE POETIC SYMMETRY OF BODY AND LIMB AND MIND COMBINING TO ONE EFFECT.
HE CATCHES AT THE TREE, AND IT NEARLY WRENCHES HIS ARMS OUT OF THEIR SOCKETS--
--BUT HE CLINGS TO THE SAPLING AND IT BENDS UNDER HIS WEIGHT.
IT CURVES TO THE GROUND, QUIVERING WITH UNLEASHED POWER--
--STRAINING TO RETURN TO ITS NATURAL POSITION.
THE AFTERNOON WAITS. NIGHT IS AN ETERNITY AWAY AGAIN. AND THE GIFT OF FLIGHT HAS BEEN ONLY MOMENTARY.
AND DOES HE IMAGINE IT, OR IS MOKADI SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE FOCAL POINT OF THIS ACTION?
THE BOULDER ROLLS SLOWLY... TOO SLOWLY ...WHILE THE TREE PROTESTS ITS MUTI-LATION AND DEMANDS RELEASE.


GOLIATH AT THE INSTANT OF HIS DOWNFALL--
--NEVER ABLE TO COMPREHEND THE TURN OF EVENTS!
AND BLOOD CLAIMS THE AFTERNOON.
"MOKADI," HE CALLS WEAKLY, TREMBLING. HE IS VAGUELY AWARE THAT KILLMONGER HAS LEFT. "MOKADI," HE WHISPERS, THEN REALIZES THE SPRITE IS GONE.
WAS HE EVER REALLY THERE? HE HAS HEARD THE WORD MOKADI BEFORE. TO THE BOMITABA TRIBE IN THE LIKUALA REGION OF AFRICA THE TERM MEANS...
SPIRIT.
QUESTIONS.
YOU HAVE TO ASK THE QUESTIONS --BUT BEFORE YOU CAN ASK YOU MUST LEARN WHAT THE QUESTIONS ARE.
WHO WERE YOU, MOKADI? A THOUGHT MIRROR OR SAGE PYGMI?
LIMPLY, HE LEAVES THE SCENE. HE MUST SEEK HERBS TO SALVE HIS WOUNDS.
WHO ARE THE SERPENTS? AND HOW MANY BREEDS ARE THERE?
A FEW CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SCENE ARE MISSED.
FOR SOME, NIGHT DOES NOT ARRIVE.
AS USUAL.

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

SPECIAL BULLETIN FROM THE WAKANDA CON!

No, we don't have any further news to report on Lorna and her pet mongoose, those stalwarts who have been waiting in the wings to fill our back-up features pages. And there they shall wait for awhile longer, maybe quite awhile longer if all things go well, as we've finally managed to get the Panther's adventures up to a full book.

We'd like to thank you, because it was, in part, your support, your response that helped influence the decision to get those extra pages. See, you *can* change things. Thanks, People.

And now, let's get into those incisive missives on JUNGLE ACTION #12!

Dear Don,

It's always a thought-provoking pleasure to read another issue of JUNGLE ACTION featuring the McGregor Hero—what's that? The character's name is the Black Panther? Well, yes, that's true, on one level. I like JUNGLE ACTION, featuring the Black Panther, too.

Don, you are the only comic writer I know of who can write consistently and clearly on two levels at the same time. It was particularly evident in this issue: you were not only writing the Panther's exploits, you were writing *about* them, at the same time. While the stories are tightly plotted, spectacularly drawn (kudos once more to Billy and Klaus, and excitingly unexpected (who would have imagined that T'Challa would lose his tussle with Killmonger? Bravo!), there is a level on which the Black Panther is Don McGregor's vehicle for asking questions and posing problems about the whole concept of a hero.

Wakanda, as we have seen, is a complex place, with real turbulences and that unrest which always categorizes a vital community. It is a place where whumping the bad guys is not enough. How does a super-hero overcome such powers as isolationism, mistrust, cultural chauvinism, uncertainty, and despair? These are the foes which the Panther, as the McGregor Hero, has faced, every bit as much as he has fought Killmonger, Venomm, Malice, Baron Macabre, King Cadaver, Lord Karnaj, and Sombre. Colorful and dynamic as the latter foes are (and they make for good solid comic-book reading), I appreciate more the Panther's struggles against the first set, since we're in that very same fight.

Issue # 12 was not just the issue in which you, Don, Billy, and Klaus gave us "the senses-shattering ORIGIN of King Cadaver! The stupefying SECRET of Erik Killmonger!" or "this is IT! SHOWDOWN between T'Challa and—KILLMONGER! Don't MISS IT!", although it had all that in it. Just as the bridge disappeared into the mist without sign of the other side, this was the Panther's battle with *despair.* What do we do when hope goes away? When they are realized as illusion, those broken dreams? How do you *keep* from despairing? T'Challa fought against Killmonger, and lost. But that was not what the story was all about: T'Challa fought against despair, and won.

Don, your stories are not easy to read (although neither are they incoherent); nor are they free from some occasional bombastic excess. Your stories are thought over meticulously, and done with such vigor and honesty that they don't seem artificial. Plus, they have a thing which comics rarely have, even the best of them: meaning.

Oh, but there ain't no such thing as a "piece of burn't-out star," Don. Nor "quasar-like rays" neither. A writer you is. A physicist you isn't.

I'll say one thing: the Black Panther is the hardest strip to write letters about of any comic strip extant. The letters have a tendency to degenerate into "yeah, right! I really dug...was fantastic!..kudos to...blew my mind...finest scene I ever...keep Billy, Klaus, Don on...how do you guys...well, until...Make Mine Marvel!"

Well, you get the idea. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

PETER B. GILLIS
18 Bayberry Road, Elmsford, NY 10523

Talk about incisive comments.

You're certainly right. There ain't no such thing as a quasar-like ray, Pete, and Don McGregor is about as far away from being a physicist as anyone is ever likely to get. Actually, Don had done some research into the area but misinterpreted some of the data he had read and realized his mistake just after the book had gone to press.

You should see the mistakes we catch *before* they go to press. Don tried to correct that incorrectly worded passage in JUNGLE ACTION #13 (you'll probably find some fault with it because he's still a long, loooonng way from becoming a physicist) and promptly forgot to add a "Panther's Rage Continues" to the splash page.

His screams have yet to fade.

We'll be waiting for Marveldom at Large to give their senses shattering reaction to Mokadi. Is any reaction at Marvel anything less than senses-shattering? We're not sure if we asked that question or if that was Mokadi adding his subtle inquiries.

Dear Roy, Don, Billy and Klaus:

The Black Panther in JUNGLE ACTION is one of the brightest stars in the comic constellation. Rarely, if ever, has an entire society been so completely and adeptly fabricated in the history of the four-color comic. Rarely, if ever, does each issue of a comic have within it a philosophical theme which does not get in the way of the plot, but rather, augments it. Rarely, if ever, is the small-scale epic handled well in comics. And rarest of all is the series which does all of these well, and remains exciting. The Panther series is that series.

I think, however, that the strip can carry another three pages, and that Messrs. McGregor and Graham are capable. So how about it, guys?

Keep it up, and you will demonstrate, as is shown so rarely, that comics and intelligence are not mutually exclusive.

Roger Klorese
2739 East 65th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234

Comics and intelligence, as you've noted, are not mutually exclusive, nor need they be. We may not always achieve such lofty pinnacles, but there are many creative people experimenting and designing new and stimulating ways to entertain you, to banish the stigma that has been attached to comics for such a long time.

We all have one thing in common and that is our love for comics, and that, if anything, will be the one element that will keep comics alive and healthy in the coming years.

NEXT ISSUE: "THORNS IN THE FLESH, THORNS IN THE MIND!" The Panther starts back toward Central Wakanda and a new costume, but not before he meets a new villain, a newer threat, and ends up in the most devastating trap ever designed for a super-hero...one he may not escape from...at least not alive. You'll want to travel with T'Challa as he enters...The Forest of Thorns! And it may be a one way trip, Folks.

Hang in there!

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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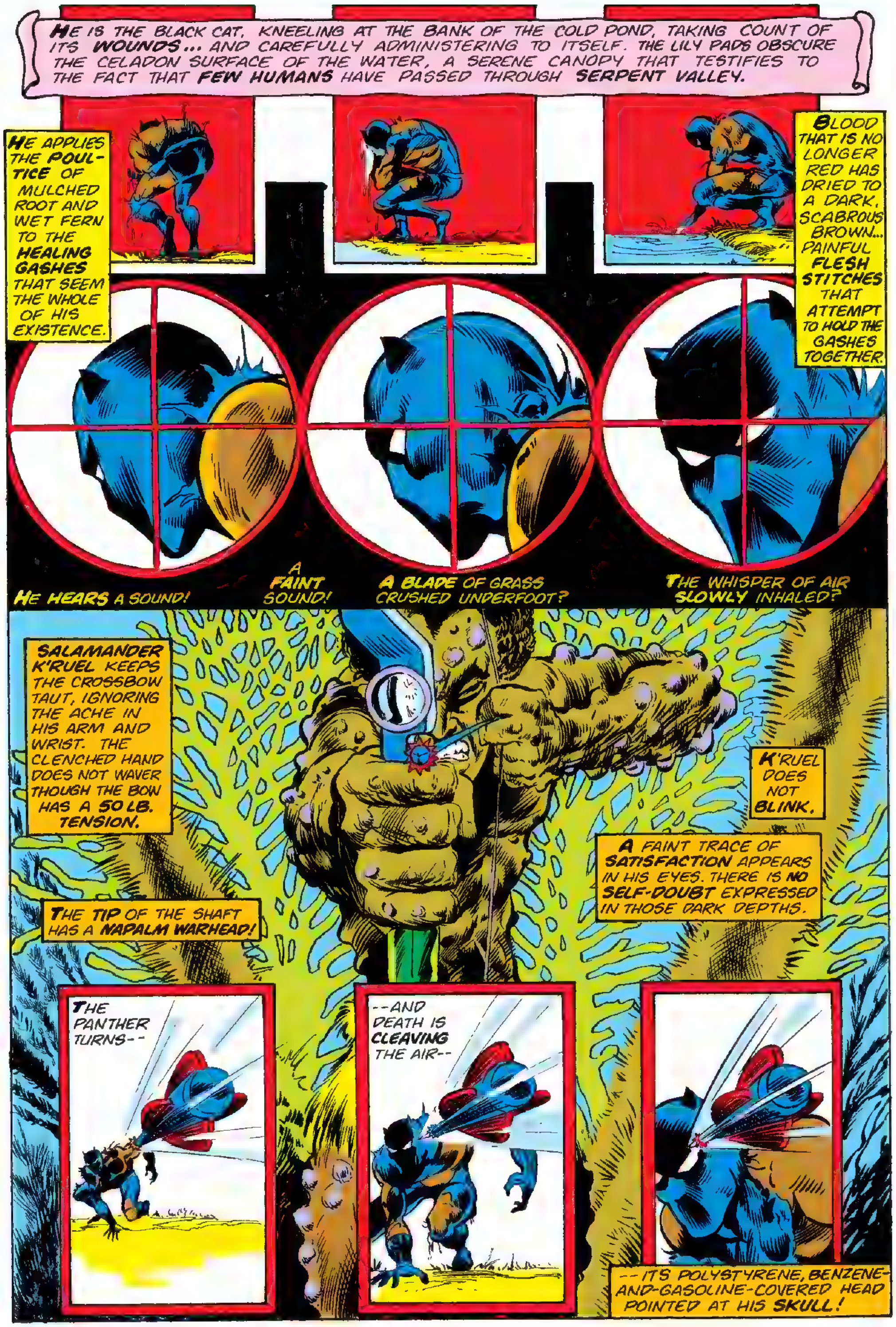
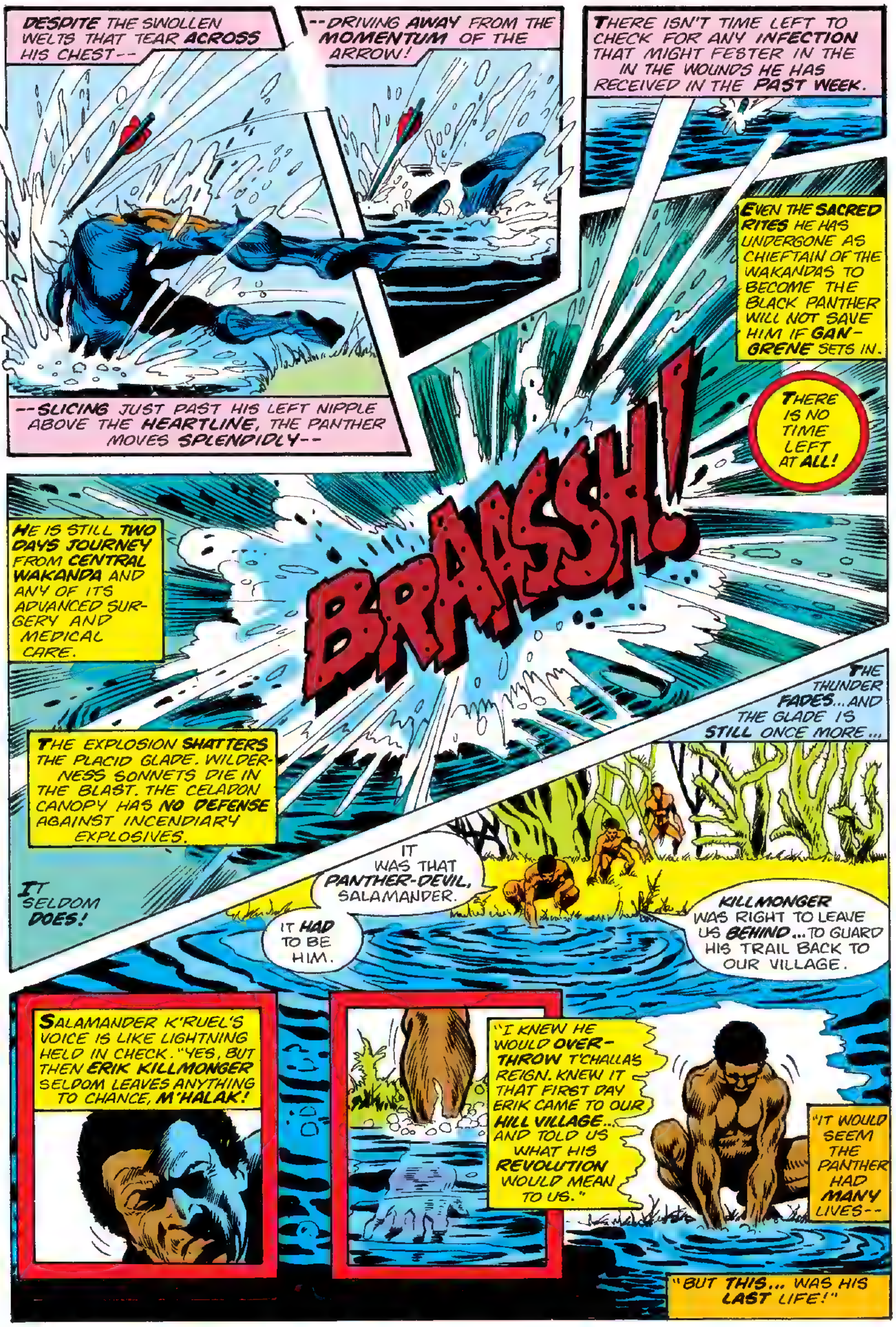
JUNGLE ACTION
THE BLACK PANTHER
PREHISTORIC DEATH LOOMS HIGH ABOVE WAKANDA--FLESH-PIERCING DOOM WAITS BELOW!
THERE IS DANGER APLENTY IN THE FOREST OF THORNS! GET THE POINT, PILGRIM?
THE BLACK PANTHER IS ABOUT TO!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
DON MCGREGOR WRITER / BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST / DAN GREEN INKER / KAREN MANTLO, LETTERER GLYNIS OLIVER WEIN, COLORIST / LEN WEIN EDITOR
THORNS IN THE FLESH THORNS IN THE MIND
PANTHER'S RAGE CONTINUES:
INSECURITY! IT STABS INTO THE BRAIN AND LAYS CLAIM TO ITS TERRITORY!
ITS THORNS OF SELF-DOUBT WILL RIP YOUR PSYCHE AS WELL AS YOUR FLESH--
--AND ITS MARKS MAY LAST A LIFETIME OF CRYPTIC, NEAR UNCIPHERABLE COMPULSIONS THAT LEAD YOU TOWARD... DESTRUCTION!
THE FOREST OF THORNS IS SILENT AND THICK WITH THE SCENT OF CACTUS RIPENING IN THE TROPIC HEAT. THE BLACK PANTHER'S ACUTE SENSES BURN WITH THE ODOR OF THE BRIARS--
--AND THUS, HE IS NOT YET AWARE OF...
SALAMANDER K'RUEL!



HE IS THE BLACK CAT, KNEELING AT THE BANK OF THE COLD POND, TAKING COUNT OF ITS WOUNDS... AND CAREFULLY ADMINISTERING TO ITSELF. THE LILY PADS OBSCURE THE CELADON SURFACE OF THE WATER, A SERENE CANOPY THAT TESTIFIES TO THE FACT THAT FEW HUMANS HAVE PASSED THROUGH SERPENT VALLEY.
HE APPLIES THE POULTICE OF MULCHED ROOT AND WET FERN TO THE HEALING GASHES THAT SEEM THE WHOLE OF HIS EXISTENCE.
BLOOD THAT IS NO LONGER RED HAS DRIED TO A DARK, SCABROUS BROWN... PAINFUL FLESH STITCHES THAT ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE GASHES TOGETHER.
HE HEARS A SOUND!
A FAINT SOUND!
A BLADE OF GRASS CRUSHED UNDERFOOT?
THE WHISPER OF AIR SLOWLY INHALED?
SALAMANDER K'RUEL KEEPS THE CROSSBOW TAUT, IGNORING THE ACHE IN HIS ARM AND WRIST. THE CLENCHED HAND DOES NOT WAVER THOUGH THE BOW HAS A 50 LB. TENSION.
K'RUEL DOES NOT BLINK.
A FAINT TRACE OF SATISFACTION APPEARS IN HIS EYES. THERE IS NO SELF-DOUBT EXPRESSED IN THOSE DARK DEPTHS.
THE TIP OF THE SHAFT HAS A NAPALM WARHEAD!
THE PANTHER TURNS--
--AND DEATH IS CLEAVING THE AIR--
--ITS POLYSTYRENE, BENZENE-AND-GASOLINE-COVERED HEAD POINTED AT HIS SKULL!



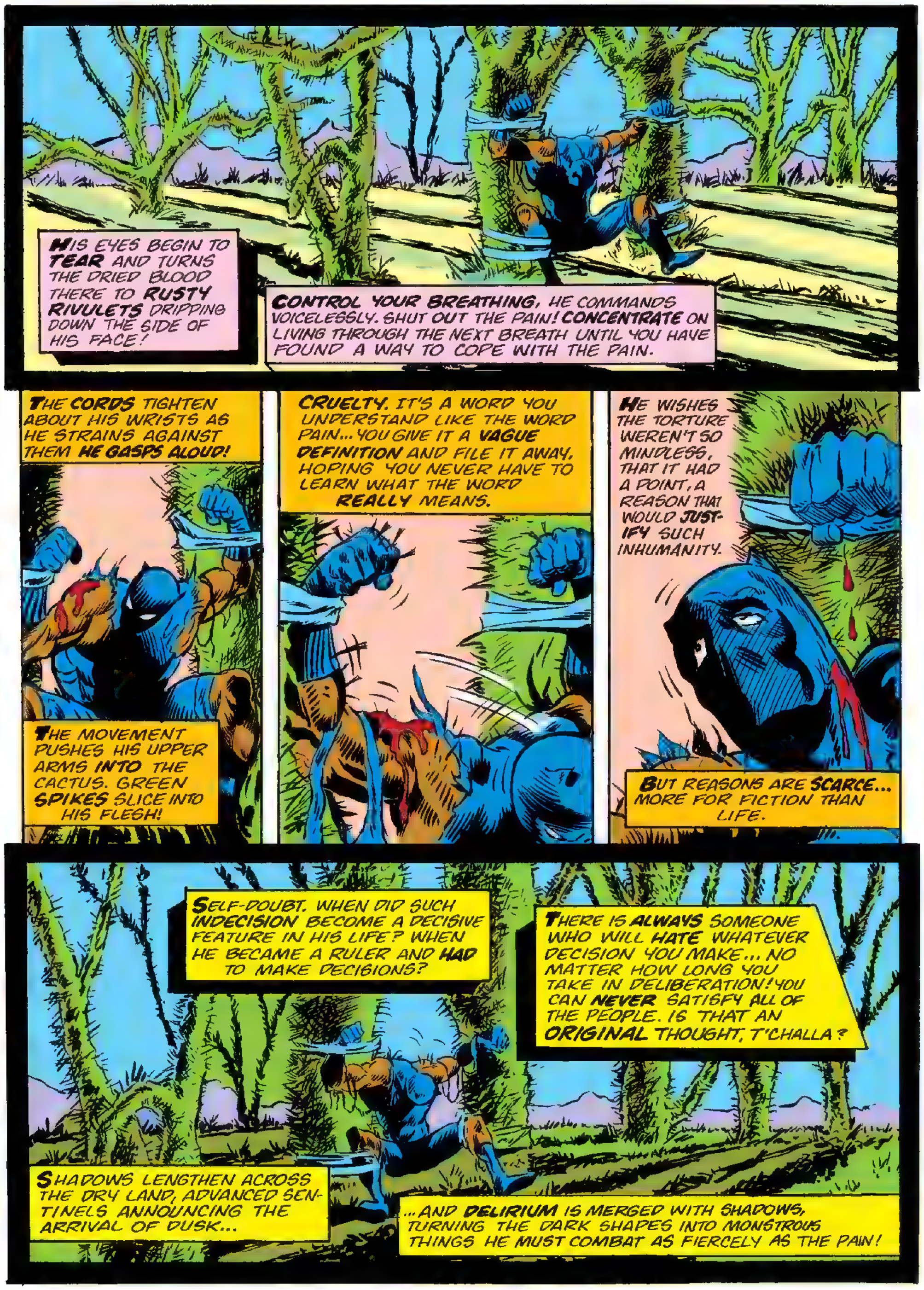
DESPITE THE SWOLLEN WELTS THAT TEAR ACROSS HIS CHEST--
--SLICING JUST PAST HIS LEFT NIPPLE ABOVE THE HEARTLINE, THE PANTHER MOVES SPLENDIDLY--
--DRIVING AWAY FROM THE MOMENTUM OF THE ARROW!
THERE ISN'T TIME LEFT TO CHECK FOR ANY INFECTION THAT MIGHT FESTER IN THE IN THE WOUNDS HE HAS RECEIVED IN THE PAST WEEK.
EVEN THE SACRED RITES HE HAS UNDERGONE AS CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS TO BECOME THE BLACK PANTHER WILL NOT SAVE HIM IF GANGRENE SETS IN.
THERE IS NO TIME LEFT AT ALL!
BRAASSH!
HE IS STILL TWO DAYS JOURNEY FROM CENTRAL WAKANDA AND ANY OF ITS ADVANCED SURGERY AND MEDICAL CARE.
THE EXPLOSION SHATTERS THE PLACID GLADE. WILDERNESS SONNETS DIE IN THE BLAST. THE CELADON CANOPY HAS NO DEFENSE AGAINST INCENDIARY EXPLOSIVES.
IT SELDOM DOES!
THE THUNDER FADES...AND THE GLADE IS STILL ONCE MORE...
IT WAS THAT PANTHER-DEVIL, SALAMANDER.
IT HAD TO BE HIM.
KILLMONGER WAS RIGHT TO LEAVE US BEHIND...TO GUARD HIS TRAIL BACK TO OUR VILLAGE.
SALAMANDER K'RUEL'S VOICE IS LIKE LIGHTNING HELD IN CHECK. "YES, BUT THEN ERIK KILLMONGER SELDOM LEAVES ANYTHING TO CHANCE, M'HALAK!
"I KNEW HE WOULD OVERTHROW T'CHALLA'S REIGN. KNEW IT THAT FIRST DAY ERIK CAME TO OUR HILL VILLAGE... AND TOLD US WHAT HIS REVOLUTION WOULD MEAN TO US."
"IT WOULD SEEM THE PANTHER HAD MANY LIVES--
"BUT THIS... WAS HIS LAST LIFE!"

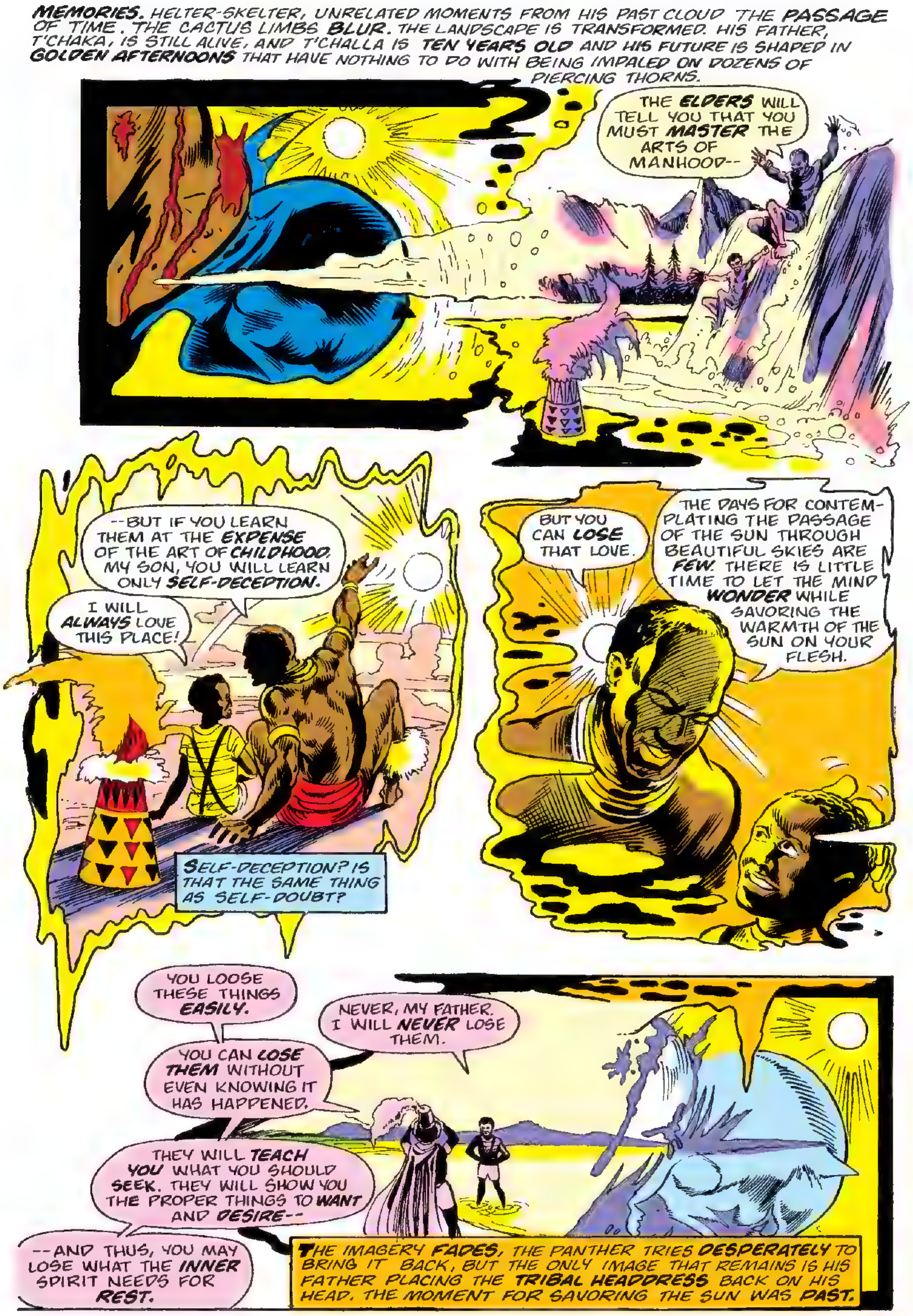
--BUT NOT TODAY.
SELF-DOUBT. IT CAN PARALYSE ONE INTO INACTIVITY. IT CRIPPLES THE MIND... AND THEREFORE CRIPPLES THE BODY.
SALAMANDER K'RUEL IS NOT BOTHERED BY SUCH NICETIES AS SELF-DOUBT.
YOU DO NOT DIE EASY, CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS!
THAT'S A TITLE YOU SHOULD SAVOR. YOU WON'T HAVE IT FOR MUCH LONGER.
AFTER A COUP THE MAGNITUDE OF YOUR DEATH--
--I WONDER WHAT TITLE KILLMONGER WILL BESTOW UPON ME.
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?
I THINK YOU'VE FOUND IT!
SELF-DOUBT. THE PANTHER HAS HAD IT AS A CONSTANT COMPANION... TO HAUNT HIS NIGHTS AND DARKEN THE SUNLIGHT. THE FIGHT SEEMS ENDLESS, AND IF THERE IS AN END, WHAT WILL IT SOLVE? ONE DAY IT MIGHT MAKE FOR INTERESTING HISTORY TEXT-BOOKS--
THE BOW HUMS VIOLENTLY AND THE PANTHER LEAPS, MAGNIFICENTLY--
SHOOSH!
--OVER THORNS THAT JUT VICIOUSLY FROM TWISTED LIMBS--
--AND UNDER THE LETHAL SHAFT!
THUMP...
IT THUDS INTO THE PULP SURFACE OF CACTUS--

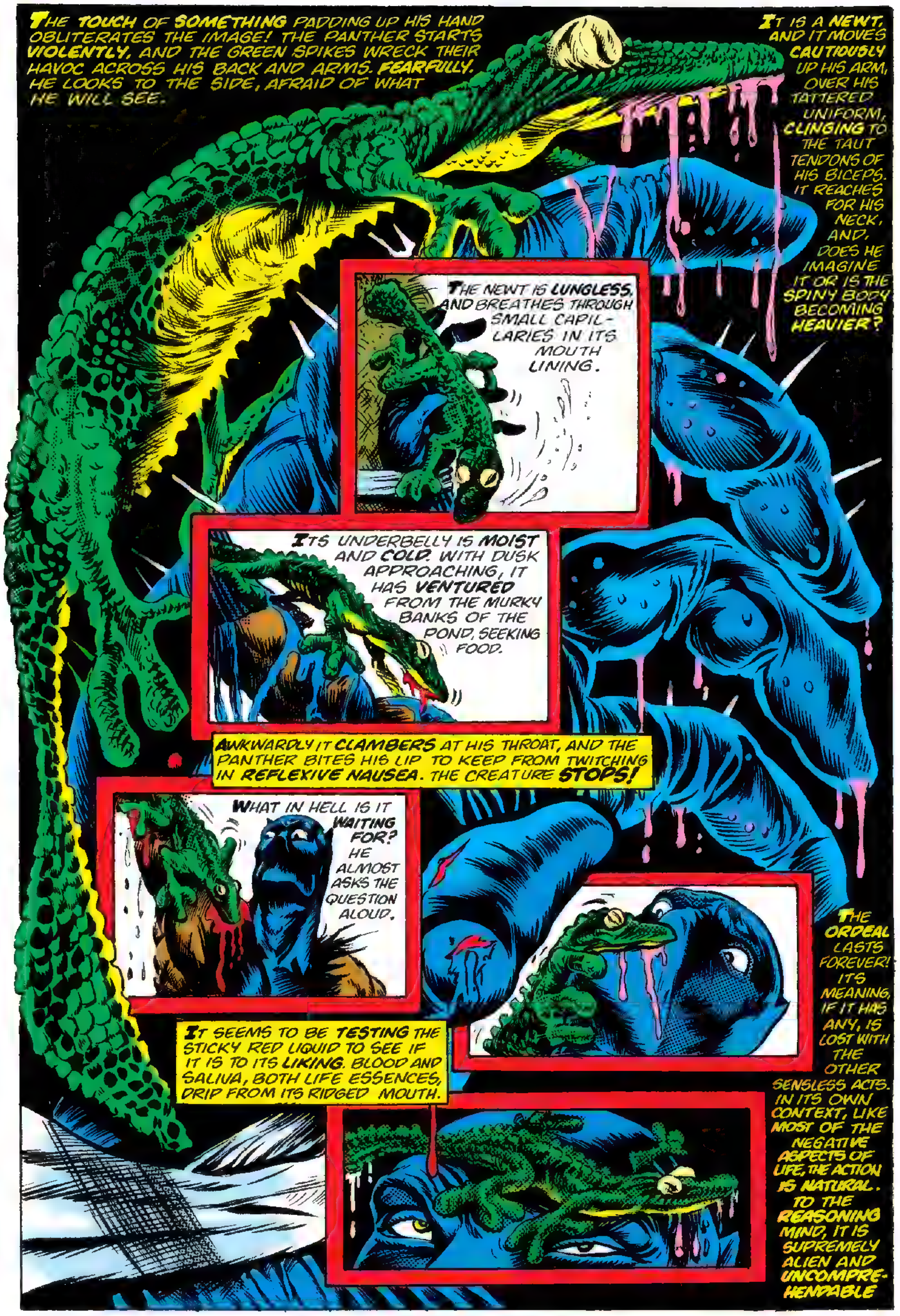
--AND DETONATES! THE BLAST SPLATTERS THE COMBATANTS WITH WARM CACTUS MEAT AND SLICING THORNS!
BLAM!
THREE RIBS BREAK SOUNDLESSLY UNDER THE IMPACT!
THE PANTHER LETS HIMSELF BE HURTLED FORWARD BY THE MOMENTUM OF THE EXPLOSION, TUCKING HIS HEAD INTO HIS CHEST AND DRIVING HIS SHOULDER INTO HIS SECOND OPPONENT'S LUNGS.
NOW THERE'S JUST YOU AND I LEFT... PERHAPS YOU WON'T ENJOY THIS COMBAT SO JOYOUSLY!
DOES THAT BOTHER YOU? THAT I ENJOY THE HUNT AND THE BATTLE?
IF TWO SUCH ENEMIES AS YOU AND I ARE TO CLASH, I THINK IT FITTING THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHOSE HAND DELIVERED YOUR DEFEAT.
I AM... SALAMANDER K'RUEL.
I SEE I STILL DISTURB YOU, CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS.
NOT ANY LONGER, K'RUEL... NOW YOU ONLY SICKEN ME.
THE CHALLENGE IS ISSUED. TWO MEN STUDY EACH OTHER, CONTEMPLATING EACH OTHER'S WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS--
--AND THEN THEY LOCK IN SILENT FEROCITY.
HE WOULD ASK FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SUCH AGONY
--BUT THE PAIN MAKES ARTICULATE SPEECH IMPOSSIBLE.
A HUNDRED NEEDLES PUNCTURE FLESH, QUILLS THAT DRIVE DEEP INTO HIS ARMS AND CHEST AND THROUGH THE SOFT INNER FLESH AT THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS WHERE HE HAS CLUTCHED AT K'RUEL.
A DROP OF BLOOD SPILLS INTO THE CORNER OF HIS EYE--
--AND THE WORLD BECOMES MAGENTA DISTORTIONS OF THE VICTOR STANDING OVER THE CONQUERED IN TIMELESS ARROGANCE!

UNCONSCIOUSNESS GIVES WAY TO PAIN; INTENSE, SEARING TORMENT THAT BLINDS HIS OPENING EYES. HIS SENSES ARE POSSESSED BY A COLLAGE OF WOUNDS, OLD AND NEW, BLENDING IN ONE TOTAL, EXCRUCIATING COMMENT. HE TURNS THE SCREAM THAT RISES TO HIS LIPS INTO A SNARL, BRACING HIMSELF AGAINST THE PAIN, FORCING HIS EYES TO SEE PAST THE LANCING SHAFTS OF LIGHT.
K'RUEL STANDS BEFORE HIM, BUT HE DOES NOT TRY TO MOVE. HE MUST UNDERSTAND THE TRAP FIRST.
I'VE SENT THE OTHERS HOBBLING AHEAD. I WANTED TO WAIT UNTIL YOU'D REVIVED BEFORE I LEFT TO REJOIN KILLMONGER.
YOU MIGHT THINK IT WASN'T SPORTING OF ME NOT TO WARN YOU ABOUT THE POWERS THAT I GAINED FROM RESURRECTION ALTAR. I CALL IT STRATEGY! NO HARD FEELINGS, I TRUST?
THOSE RAYS, WHATEVER THEY WERE, KILLED MANY OF THE MEN KILLMONGER HAD EXPOSED TO THEM! I DIDN'T LEARN THAT 'TILL AFTER I'D BEEN STRAPPED TO THE ALTAR.
I MUST BE LEAVING. YOU'VE DETAINED ME LONG ENOUGH AS IT IS. BUT I'LL RETURN. WITH KILLMONGER! BY THEN, THE SALAMANDERS IN THIS FOREST WILL HAVE SWARMED OVER YOUR BODY... AND THE PTERODACTYLS, LOOKING FOR A MEAL... WILL HAVE FOUND ONE!
YOU LOOK ASTONISHED. THAT CAN ONLY MEAN YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THE FLYING REPTILES IN SERPENT VALLEY!
TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS. THEY EXIST!
BUT DON'T YOU HAVE ANY PARTING WORDS? NO CLEVER SHOUTS ABOUT HOW I CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS? HOW SAD. I'D REALLY BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
GOOD-DAY, CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS!

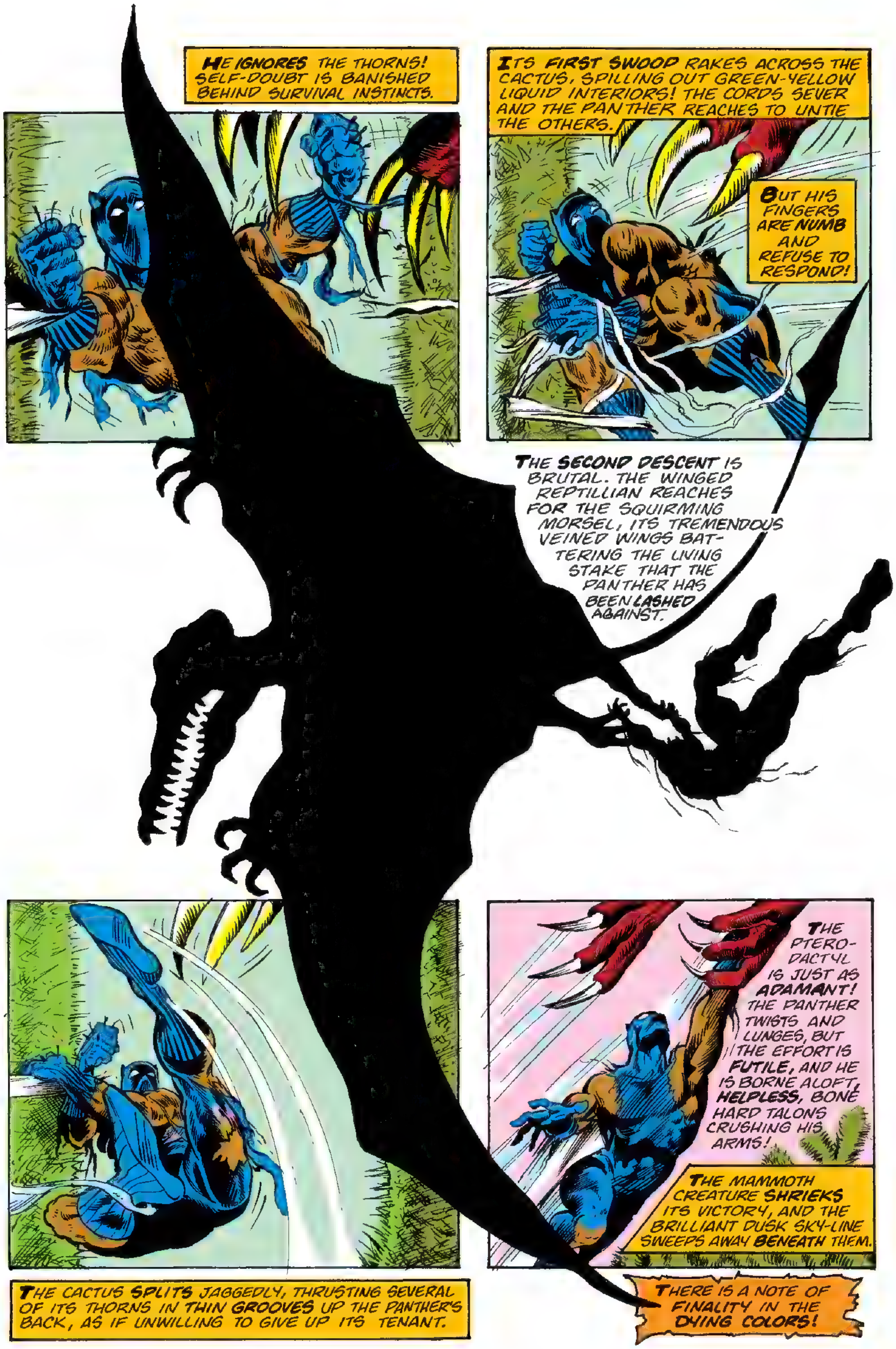
THE MIDMORNING HEAT CLINGS TO THE NETWORK OF BRAMBLES AND CACTUS. K'RUEL WALKS AWAY SLOWLY, FLAUNTING HIS FREEDOM. THE PANTHER DOES **NOT MOVE** UNTIL K'RUEL'S FIGURE HAS BEEN LOST AMID THE THORNED BRANCHES.

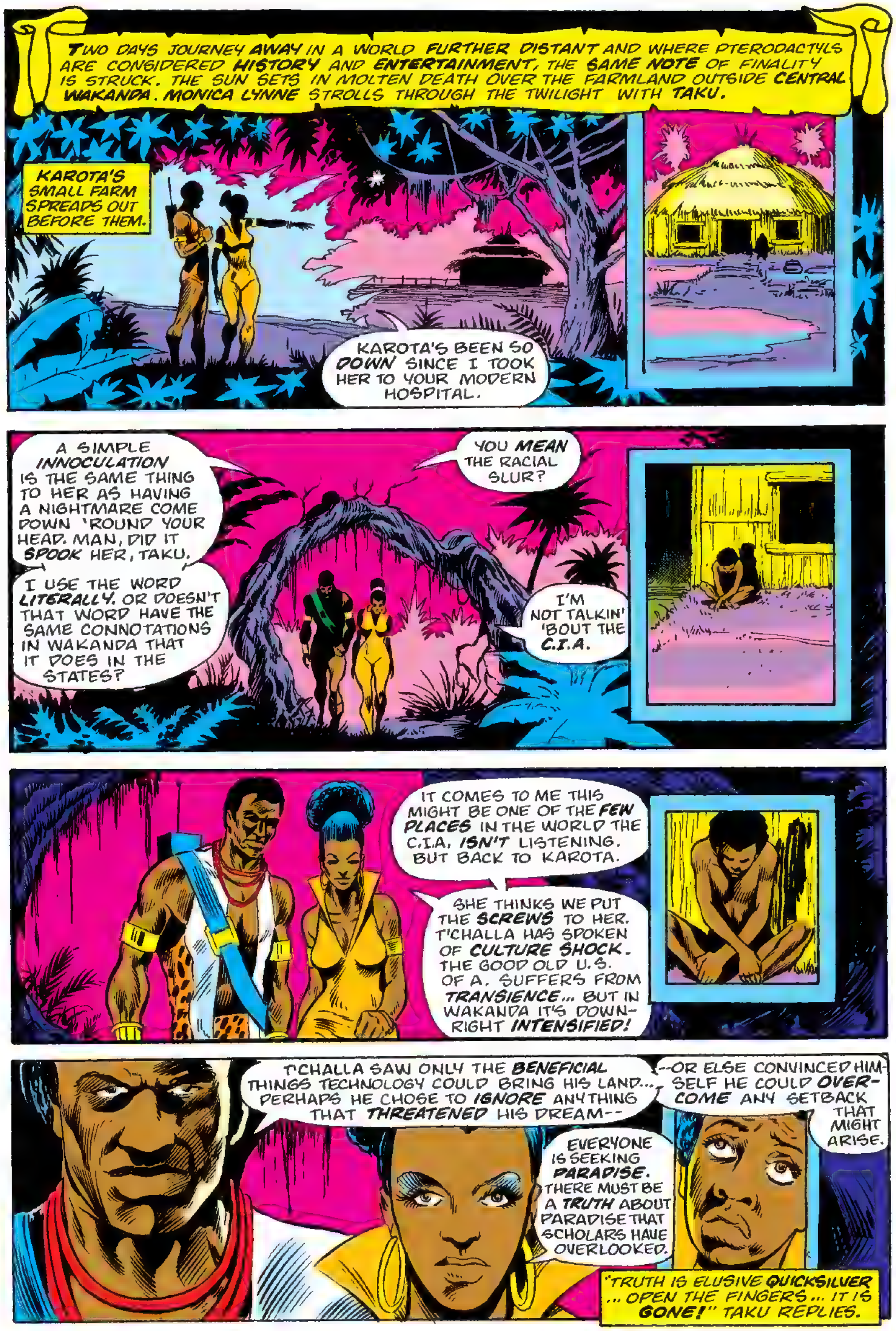


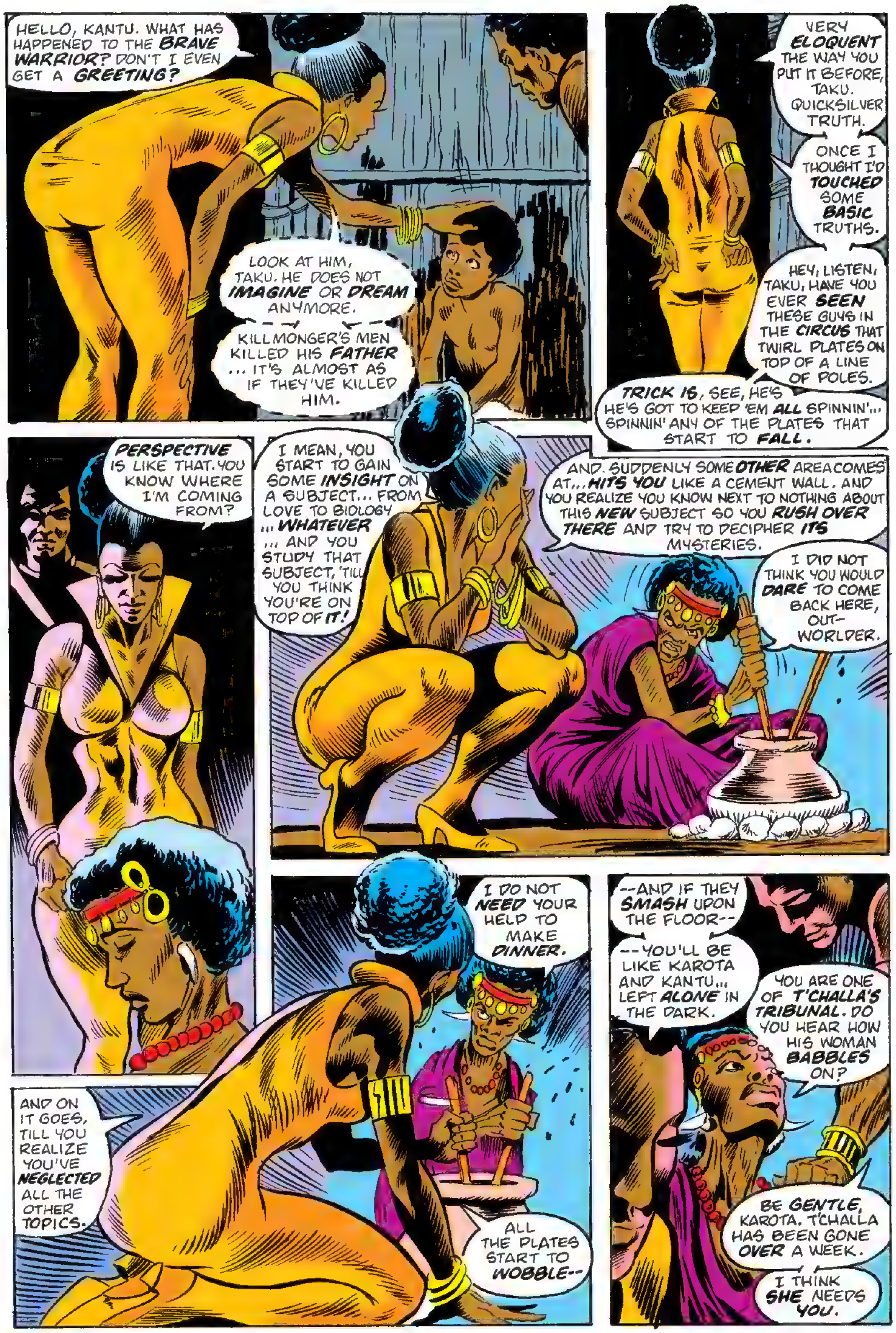

MEMORIES. HELTER-SKELTER, UNRELATED MOMENTS FROM HIS PAST CLOUD THE PASSAGE OF TIME. THE CACTUS LIMBS BLUR. THE LANDSCAPE IS TRANSFORMED. HIS FATHER, T'CHAKA, IS STILL ALIVE, AND T'CHALLA IS TEN YEARS OLD AND HIS FUTURE IS SHAPED IN GOLDEN AFTERNOONS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING IMPALED ON DOZENS OF PIERCING THORNS.
THE ELDERS WILL TELL YOU THAT YOU MUST MASTER THE ARTS OF MANHOOD--
--BUT IF YOU LEARN THEM AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ART OF CHILDHOOD, MY SON, YOU WILL LEARN ONLY SELF-DECEPTION.
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE THIS PLACE!
SELF-DECEPTION? IS THAT THE SAME THING AS SELF-DOUBT?
BUT YOU CAN LOSE THAT LOVE.
THE DAYS FOR CONTEMPLATING THE PASSAGE OF THE SUN THROUGH BEAUTIFUL SKIES ARE FEW. THERE IS LITTLE TIME TO LET THE MIND WONDER WHILE SAVORING THE WARMTH OF THE SUN ON YOUR FLESH.
YOU LOOSE THESE THINGS EASILY.
NEVER, MY FATHER. I WILL NEVER LOSE THEM.
YOU CAN LOSE THEM WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT HAS HAPPENED.
THEY WILL TEACH YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD SEEK. THEY WILL SHOW YOU THE PROPER THINGS TO WANT AND DESIRE--
--AND THUS, YOU MAY LOSE WHAT THE INNER SPIRIT NEEDS FOR REST.
THE IMAGERY FADES. THE PANTHER TRIES DESPERATELY TO BRING IT BACK, BUT THE ONLY IMAGE THAT REMAINS IS HIS FATHER PLACING THE TRIBAL HEADDRESS BACK ON HIS HEAD. THE MOMENT FOR SAVORING THE SUN WAS PAST.

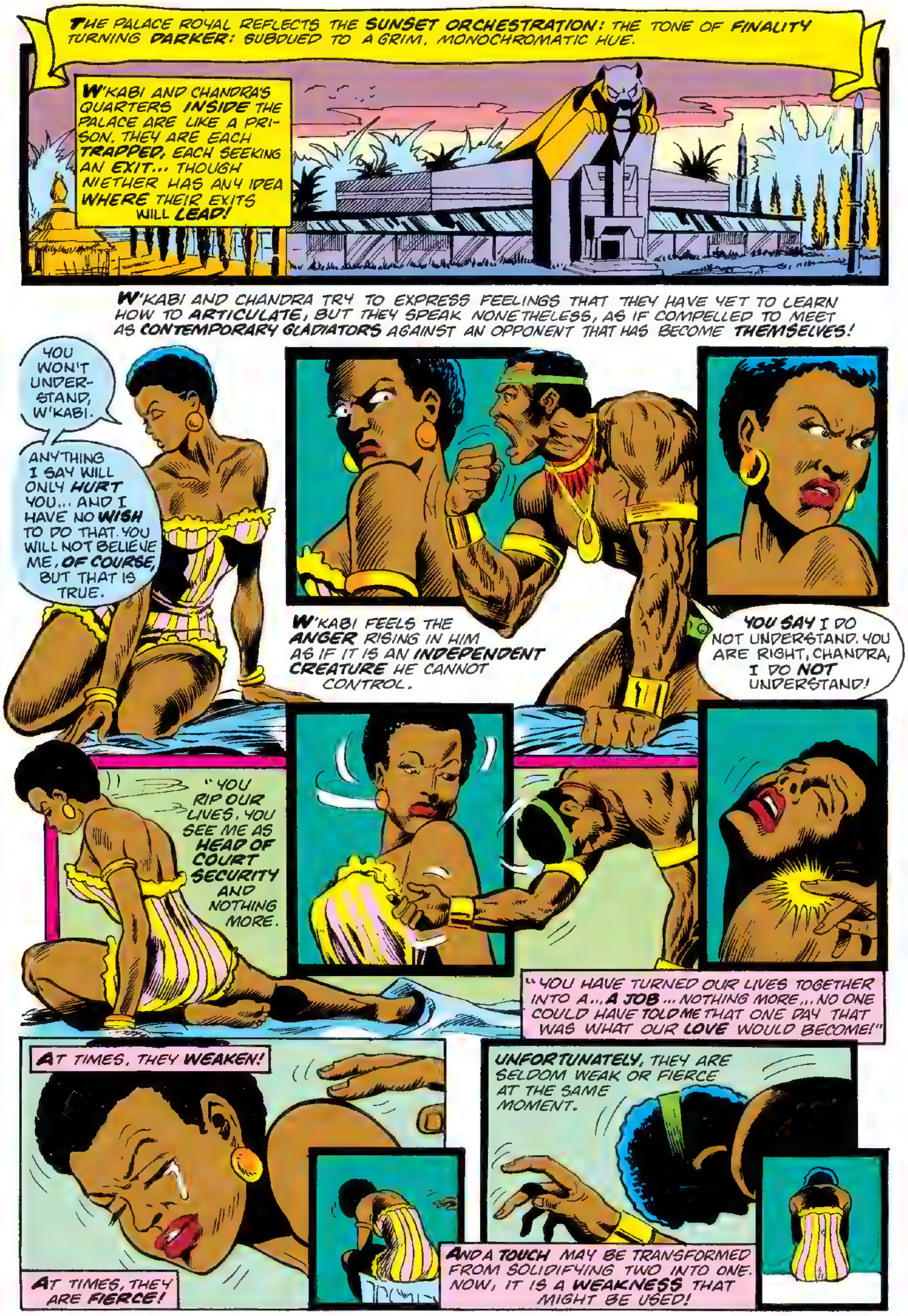

THE TOUCH OF SOMETHING PADDING UP HIS HAND OBLITERATES THE IMAGE! THE PANTHER STARTS VIOLENTLY, AND THE GREEN SPIKES WRECK THEIR HAVOC ACROSS HIS BACK AND ARMS. FEARFULLY, HE LOOKS TO THE SIDE, AFRAID OF WHAT HE WILL SEE.
IT IS A NEWT, AND IT MOVES CAUTIOUSLY UP HIS ARM, OVER HIS TATTERED UNIFORM, CLINGING TO THE TAUT TENDONS OF HIS BICEPS. IT REACHES FOR HIS NECK, AND, DOES HE IMAGINE IT OR IS THE SPINY BODY BECOMING HEAVIER?
THE NEWT IS LUNGLESS, AND BREATHES THROUGH SMALL CAPIL-LARIES IN ITS MOUTH LINING.
ITS UNDERBELLY IS MOIST AND COLD. WITH DUSK APPROACHING, IT HAS VENTURED FROM THE MURKY BANKS OF THE POND, SEEKING FOOD.
AWKWARDLY IT CLAMBERS AT HIS THROAT, AND THE PANTHER BITES HIS LIP TO KEEP FROM TWITCHING IN REFLEXIVE NAUSEA. THE CREATURE STOPS!
WHAT IN HELL IS IT WAITING FOR? HE ALMOST ASKS THE QUESTION ALOUD.
IT SEEMS TO BE TESTING THE STICKY RED LIQUID TO SEE IF IT IS TO ITS LIKING. BLOOD AND SALIVA, BOTH LIFE ESSENCES, DRIP FROM ITS RIDGED MOUTH.
THE ORDEAL LASTS FOREVER! ITS MEANING, IF IT HAS ANY, IS LOST WITH THE OTHER SENSLESS ACTS. IN ITS OWN CONTEXT, LIKE MOST OF THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF LIFE, THE ACTION IS NATURAL. TO THE REASONING MIND, IT IS SUPREMELY ALIEN AND UNCOMPRE-HENDABLE

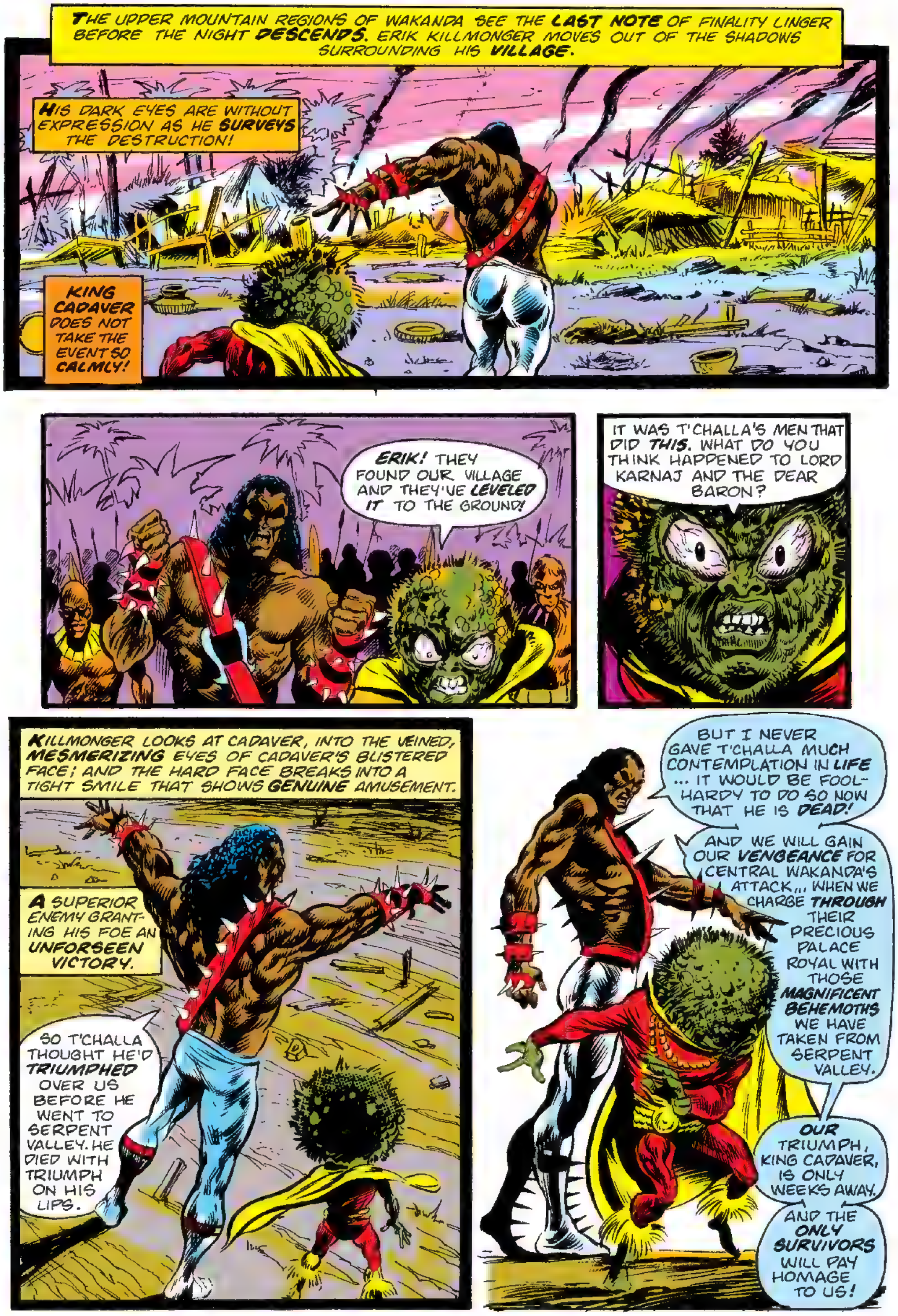
A COOL BREEZE CAUSES THE NEWT TO STIR, TREADING OVER THE SIDE OF THE PANTHER'S FACE, SQUEEZING BETWEEN THE THORNS IN SEARCH OF FOOD MORE COMMON TO ITS DIET.
THE PANTHER GOES LIMP. HE STILL FEELS THE IMPRINT OF THE NEWT'S FEET ON HIS FLESH AND HE SHIVERS.
HE CLOSES HIS EYES, AND IS ENGULFED IN BLACKNESS THAT IS FILLED WITH PULSING SPASMS. FEAR HAS PUMPED ADRENALIN THROUGH HIS BODY, AND NOW THAT THE DANGER HAS PASSED, IT HAS BROUGHT WITH IT A MORE ACUTE AWARENESS OF HIS GASHES.
HE OPENS HIS EYES TO SHADOWS THAT ARE SENTINELS TO SOMETHING MORE THAN DUSK.
NOT AGAIN! NOT SO SOON! HIS MIND YELLS DEFIANTLY. DAMN YOU, HE SAYS TO NO ONE IN IN PARTICULAR AND LOOKS UPWARD.
IT SCREECHES, A HORRENDOUS DISCORDANT SOUND THAT RIPS AT THE HUMID AIR AND PIERCES INTO HIS EARS.
HE RECOGNIZES IT IMMEDIATELY, THOUGH HE HAS NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE. HE HAS NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE ONE IN REAL LIFE, NEVER DREAMT THAT ANY COULD STILL EXIST.
IT IS A PTERODACTYL, AND ITS LEATHER WINGS FILL WITH THE WIND AS IT SWOOPS DOWNWARD! ITS EYES GLEAM MALEVOLENTLY, ALMOST AS IF IT HAS INTELLIGENT THOUGHT--
--AND IT RUSHES AT HIM, MOUTH OPENED, TALONS STIFFENING, ITS GUMS PULLING BACK FROM ITS BLACKISH, DISCOLORED TEETH.

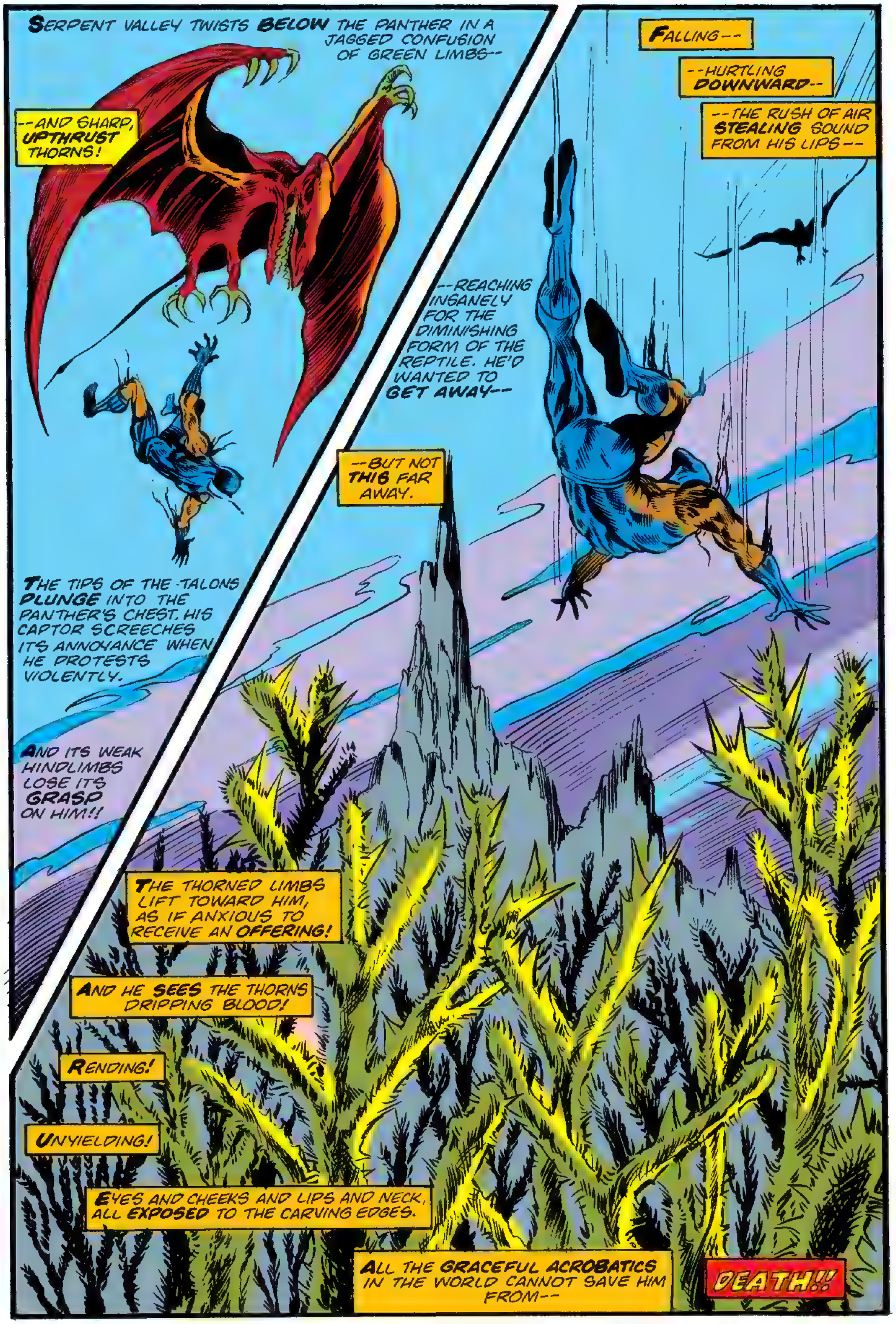

HE IGNORES THE THORNS! SELF-DOUBT IS BANISHED BEHIND SURVIVAL INSTINCTS.
ITS FIRST SWOOP RAKES ACROSS THE CACTUS, SPILLING OUT GREEN-YELLOW LIQUID INTERIORS! THE CORDS SEVER AND THE PANTHER REACHES TO UNTIE THE OTHERS.
BUT HIS FINGERS ARE NUMB AND REFUSE TO RESPOND!
THE SECOND DESCENT IS BRUTAL. THE WINGED REPTILLIAN REACHES FOR THE SQUIRMING MORSEL, ITS TREMENDOUS VEINED WINGS BATTERING THE LIVING STAKE THAT THE PANTHER HAS BEEN LASHED AGAINST.
THE CACTUS SPLITS JAGGEDLY, THRUSTING SEVERAL OF ITS THORNS IN THIN GROOVES UP THE PANTHER'S BACK, AS IF UNWILLING TO GIVE UP ITS TENANT.
THE PTERODACTYL IS JUST AS ADAMANT! THE PANTHER TWISTS AND LUNGES, BUT THE EFFORT IS FUTILE, AND HE IS BORNE ALOFT, HELPLESS, BONE HARD TALONS CRUSHING HIS ARMS!
THE MAMMOTH CREATURE SHRIEKS ITS VICTORY, AND THE BRILLIANT DUSK SKY-LINE SWEEPS AWAY BENEATH THEM.
THERE IS A NOTE OF FINALITY IN THE DYING COLORS!

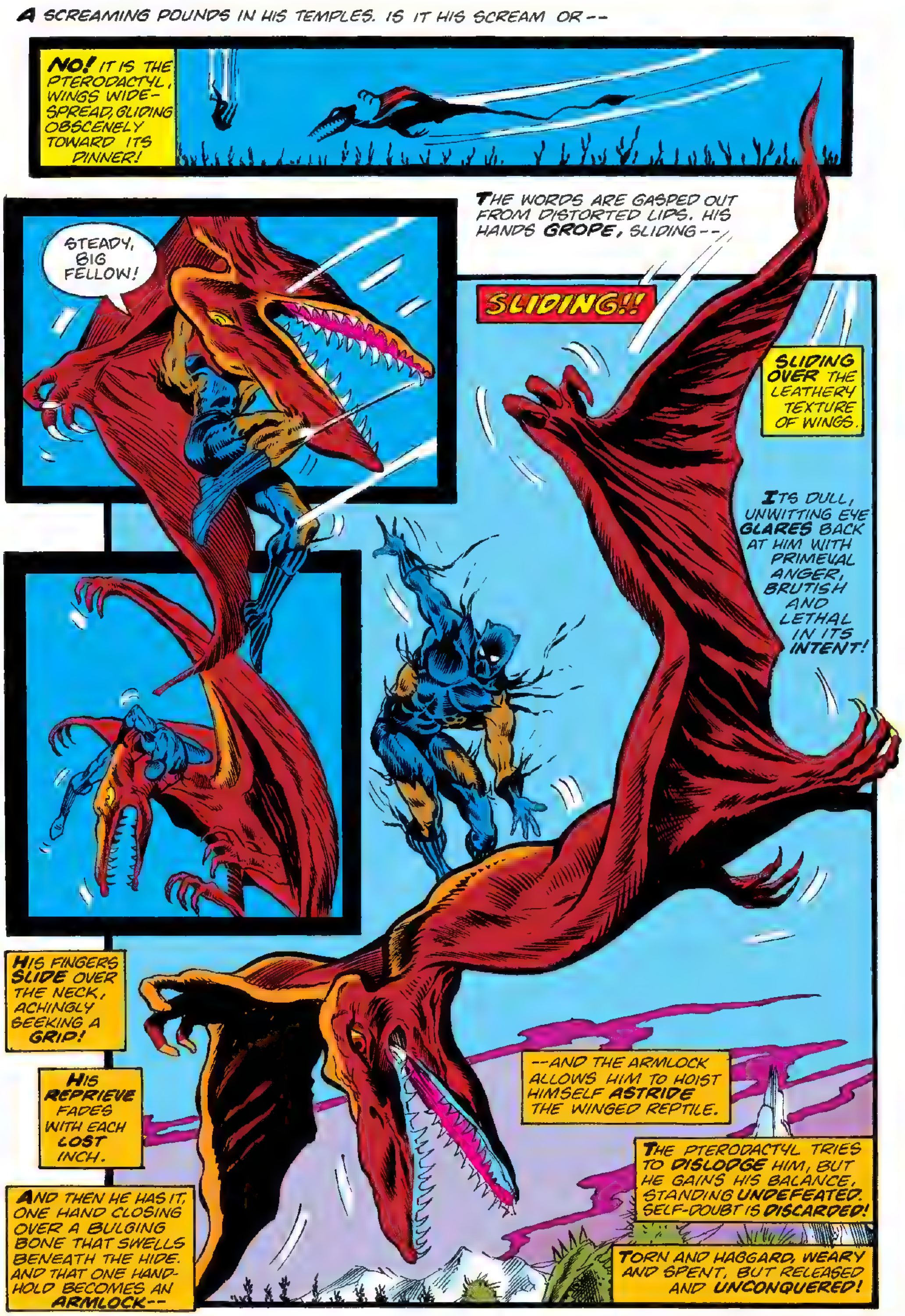

TWO DAYS JOURNEY AWAY IN A WORLD FURTHER DISTANT AND WHERE PTERODACTYLS ARE CONSIDERED HISTORY AND ENTERTAINMENT, THE SAME NOTE OF FINALITY IS STRUCK. THE SUN SETS IN MOLTEN DEATH OVER THE FARMLAND OUTSIDE CENTRAL WAKANDA. MONICA LYNNE STROLLS THROUGH THE TWILIGHT WITH TAKU.
KAROTA'S SMALL FARM SPREADS OUT BEFORE THEM.
KAROTA'S BEEN SO DOWN SINCE I TOOK HER TO YOUR MODERN HOSPITAL.
A SIMPLE INNOCULATION IS THE SAME THING TO HER AS HAVING A NIGHTMARE COME DOWN 'ROUND YOUR HEAD. MAN, DID IT SPOOK HER, TAKU.
I USE THE WORD LITERALLY. OR DOESN'T THAT WORD HAVE THE SAME CONNOTATIONS IN WAKANDA THAT IT DOES IN THE STATES?
YOU MEAN THE RACIAL SLUR?
I'M NOT TALKIN' 'BOUT THE C.I.A.
IT COMES TO ME THIS MIGHT BE ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN THE WORLD THE C.I.A. ISN'T LISTENING. BUT BACK TO KAROTA.
SHE THINKS WE PUT THE SCREWS TO HER. T'CHALLA HAS SPOKEN OF CULTURE SHOCK. THE GOOD OLD U.S. OF A. SUFFERS FROM TRANSIENCE... BUT IN WAKANDA IT'S DOWN-RIGHT INTENSIFIED!
T'CHALLA SAW ONLY THE BENEFICIAL THINGS TECHNOLOGY COULD BRING HIS LAND... PERHAPS HE CHOSE TO IGNORE ANYTHING THAT THREATENED HIS DREAM--
--OR ELSE CONVINCED HIMSELF HE COULD OVERCOME ANY SETBACK THAT MIGHT ARISE.
EVERYONE IS SEEKING PARADISE. THERE MUST BE A TRUTH ABOUT PARADISE THAT SCHOLARS HAVE OVERLOOKED.
"TRUTH IS ELUSIVE QUICKSILVER ... OPEN THE FINGERS... IT IS GONE!" TAKU REPLIES.


HELLO, KANTU. WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE BRAVE WARRIOR? DON'T I EVEN GET A GREETING?
LOOK AT HIM, TAKU. HE DOES NOT IMAGINE OR DREAM ANYMORE.
KILLMONGER'S MEN KILLED HIS FATHER ... IT'S ALMOST AS IF THEY'VE KILLED HIM.
VERY ELOQUENT THE WAY YOU PUT IT BEFORE, TAKU. QUICKSILVER TRUTH.
ONCE I THOUGHT I'D TOUCHED SOME BASIC TRUTHS.
HEY, LISTEN, TAKU, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THESE GUYS IN THE CIRCUS THAT TWIRL PLATES ON TOP OF A LINE OF POLES.
TRICK IS, SEE, HE'S HE'S GOT TO KEEP 'EM ALL SPINNIN'... SPINNIN' ANY OF THE PLATES THAT START TO FALL.
PERSPECTIVE IS LIKE THAT. YOU KNOW WHERE I'M COMING FROM?
I MEAN, YOU START TO GAIN SOME INSIGHT ON A SUBJECT... FROM LOVE TO BIOLOGY ... WHATEVER ... AND YOU STUDY THAT SUBJECT, 'TILL YOU THINK YOU'RE ON TOP OF IT!
AND SUDDENLY SOME OTHER AREA COMES AT... HITS YOU LIKE A CEMENT WALL. AND YOU REALIZE YOU KNOW NEXT TO NOTHING ABOUT THIS NEW SUBJECT SO YOU RUSH OVER THERE AND TRY TO DECIPHER ITS MYSTERIES.
I DID NOT THINK YOU WOULD DARE TO COME BACK HERE, OUT-WORLDER.
AND ON IT GOES, TILL YOU REALIZE YOU'VE NEGLECTED ALL THE OTHER TOPICS.
I DO NOT NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE DINNER.
ALL THE PLATES START TO WOBBLE--
--AND IF THEY SMASH UPON THE FLOOR--
--YOU'LL BE LIKE KAROTA AND KANTU... LEFT ALONE IN THE DARK.
YOU ARE ONE OF T'CHALLA'S TRIBUNAL. DO YOU HEAR HOW HIS WOMAN BABBLES ON?
BE GENTLE, KAROTA. T'CHALLA HAS BEEN GONE OVER A WEEK.
I THINK SHE NEEDS YOU.

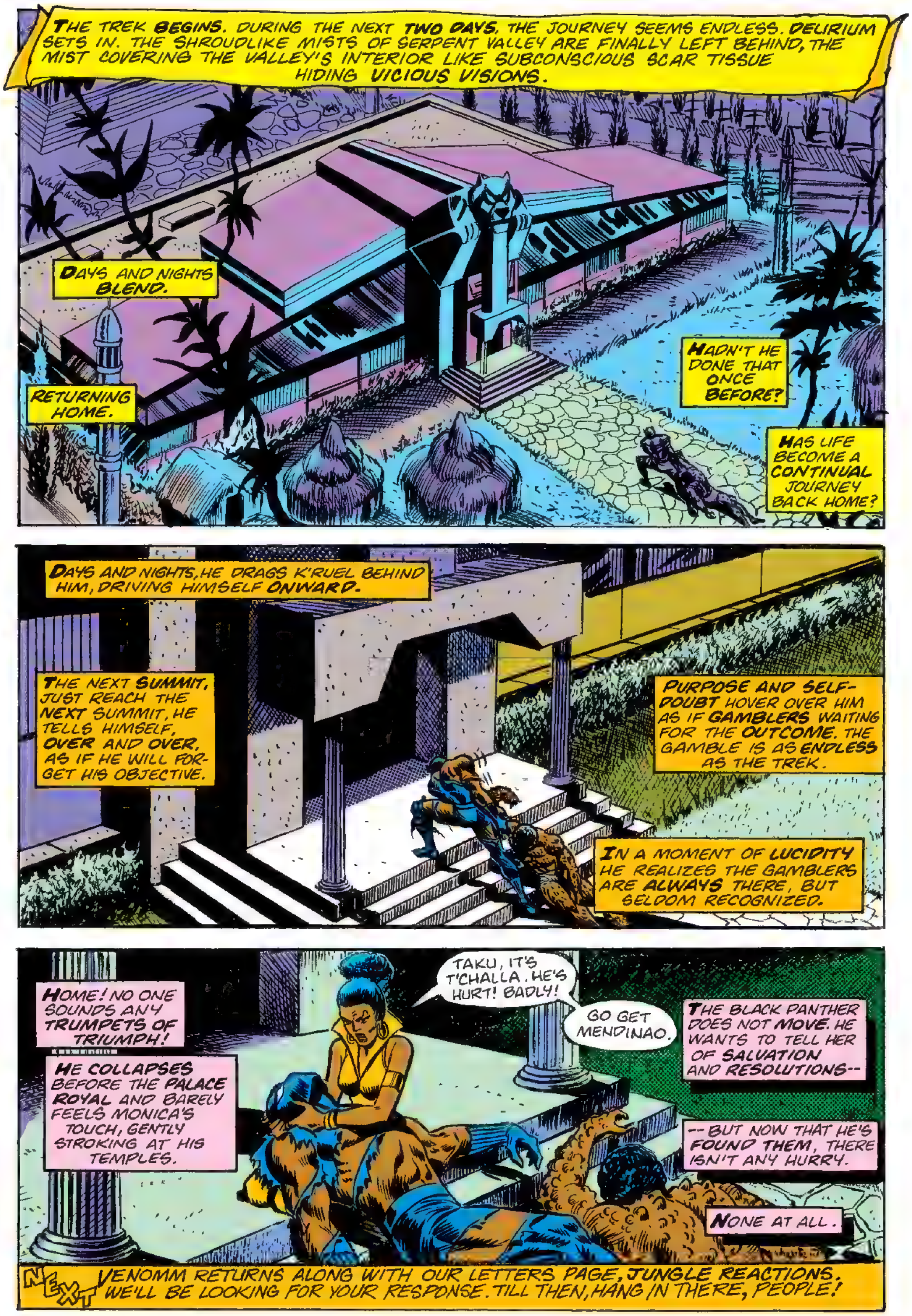

THE PALACE ROYAL REFLECTS THE SUNSET ORCHESTRATION: THE TONE OF FINALITY TURNING DARKER: SUBDUED TO A GRIM, MONOCHROMATIC HUE.
W'KABI AND CHANDRA'S QUARTERS INSIDE THE PALACE ARE LIKE A PRISON. THEY ARE EACH TRAPPED, EACH SEEKING AN EXIT... THOUGH NIETHER HAS ANY IDEA WHERE THEIR EXITS WILL LEAD!
W'KABI AND CHANDRA TRY TO EXPRESS FEELINGS THAT THEY HAVE YET TO LEARN HOW TO ARTICULATE, BUT THEY SPEAK NONETHELESS, AS IF COMPELLED TO MEET AS CONTEMPORARY GLADIATORS AGAINST AN OPPONENT THAT HAS BECOME THEMSELVES!
YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND, W'KABI.
ANYTHING I SAY WILL ONLY HURT YOU... AND I HAVE NO WISH TO DO THAT. YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE ME, OF COURSE, BUT THAT IS TRUE.
W'KABI FEELS THE ANGER RISING IN HIM AS IF IT IS AN INDEPENDENT CREATURE HE CANNOT CONTROL.
YOU SAY I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. YOU ARE RIGHT, CHANDRA, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
"YOU RIP OUR LIVES. YOU SEE ME AS HEAD OF COURT SECURITY AND NOTHING MORE.
"YOU HAVE TURNED OUR LIVES TOGETHER INTO A... A JOB... NOTHING MORE... NO ONE COULD HAVE TOLD ME THAT ONE DAY THAT WAS WHAT OUR LOVE WOULD BECOME!"
AT TIMES, THEY WEAKEN!
AT TIMES, THEY ARE FIERCE!
UNFORTUNATELY, THEY ARE SELDOM WEAK OR FIERCE AT THE SAME MOMENT.
AND A TOUCH MAY BE TRANSFORMED FROM SOLIDIFYING TWO INTO ONE. NOW, IT IS A WEAKNESS THAT MIGHT BE USED!


THE UPPER MOUNTAIN REGIONS OF WAKANDA SEE THE LAST NOTE OF FINALITY LINGER BEFORE THE NIGHT DESCENDS. ERIK KILLMONGER MOVES OUT OF THE SHADOWS SURROUNDING HIS VILLAGE.
HIS DARK EYES ARE WITHOUT EXPRESSION AS HE SURVEYS THE DESTRUCTION!
KING CADAVER DOES NOT TAKE THE EVENT SO CALMLY!
ERIK! THEY FOUND OUR VILLAGE AND THEY'VE LEVELED IT TO THE GROUND!
IT WAS T'CHALLA'S MEN THAT DID THIS. WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO LORD KARNAJ AND THE DEAR BARON?
KILLMONGER LOOKS AT CADAVER, INTO THE VEINED, MESMERIZING EYES OF CADAVER'S BLISTERED FACE; AND THE HARD FACE BREAKS INTO A TIGHT SMILE THAT SHOWS GENUINE AMUSEMENT.
A SUPERIOR ENEMY GRANTING HIS FOE AN UNFORSEEN VICTORY.
SO T'CHALLA THOUGHT HE'D TRIUMPHED OVER US BEFORE HE WENT TO SERPENT VALLEY. HE DIED WITH TRIUMPH ON HIS LIPS.
BUT I NEVER GAVE T'CHALLA MUCH CONTEMPLATION IN LIFE ... IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY TO DO SO NOW THAT HE IS DEAD!
AND WE WILL GAIN OUR VENGEANCE FOR CENTRAL WAKANDA'S ATTACK... WHEN WE CHARGE THROUGH THEIR PRECIOUS PALACE ROYAL WITH THOSE MAGNIFICENT BEHEMOTHS WE HAVE TAKEN FROM SERPENT VALLEY.
OUR TRIUMPH, KING CADAVER, IS ONLY WEEKS AWAY.
AND THE ONLY SURVIVORS WILL PAY HOMAGE TO US!


SERPENT VALLEY TWISTS BELOW THE PANTHER IN A JAGGED CONFUSION OF GREEN LIMBS--
--AND SHARP, UPTHRUST THORNS!
THE TIPS OF THE TALONS PLUNGE INTO THE PANTHER'S CHEST. HIS CAPTOR SCREECHES ITS ANNOYANCE WHEN HE PROTESTS VIOLENTLY.
AND ITS WEAK HINDLIMBS LOSE ITS GRASP ON HIM!!
FALLING--
--HURTLING DOWNWARD--
--THE RUSH OF AIR STEALING SOUND FROM HIS LIPS--
--REACHING INSANELY FOR THE DIMINISHING FORM OF THE REPTILE. HE'D WANTED TO GET AWAY--
--BUT NOT THIS FAR AWAY.
THE THORNED LIMBS LIFT TOWARD HIM, AS IF ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE AN OFFERING!
AND HE SEES THE THORNS DRIPPING BLOOD!
RENDING!
UNYIELDING!
EYES AND CHEEKS AND LIPS AND NECK, ALL EXPOSED TO THE CARVING EDGES.
ALL THE GRACEFUL ACROBATICS IN THE WORLD CANNOT SAVE HIM FROM--
DEATH!!


A SCREAMING POUNDS IN HIS TEMPLES. IS IT HIS SCREAM OR--
NO! IT IS THE PTERODACTYL, WINGS WIDE-SPREAD, GLIDING OBSCENELY TOWARD ITS DINNER!
STEADY, BIG FELLOW!
THE WORDS ARE GASPED OUT FROM DISTORTED LIPS. HIS HANDS GROPE, SLIDING--
SLIDING!!
SLIDING OVER THE LEATHERY TEXTURE OF WINGS.
ITS DULL, UNWITTING EYE GLARES BACK AT HIM WITH PRIMEVAL ANGER, BRUTISH AND LETHAL IN ITS INTENT!
HIS FINGERS SLIDE OVER THE NECK, ACHINGLY SEEKING A GRIP!
HIS REPRIEVE FADES WITH EACH LOST INCH.
AND THEN HE HAS IT, ONE HAND CLOSING OVER A BULGING BONE THAT SWELLS BENEATH THE HIDE. AND THAT ONE HAND-HOLD BECOMES AN ARMLOCK--
--AND THE ARMLOCK ALLOWS HIM TO HOIST HIMSELF ASTRIDE THE WINGED REPTILE.
THE PTERODACTYL TRIES TO DISLODGE HIM, BUT HE GAINS HIS BALANCE, STANDING UNDEFEATED. SELF-DOUBT IS DISCARDED!
TORN AND HAGGARD, WEARY AND SPENT, BUT RELEASED AND UNCONQUERED!

K'RUEL WALKS LIESURELY, CONFIDENTLY. HE HAS LEFT HIS TWO WOUNDED AIDES BEHIND, WAVING TO THEM WITH JAUNTY GOOD SPIRITS AND CLIMBS STEADILY OUT OF SERPENT VALLEY WITHOUT REALLY SEEING HIS SURROUNDINGS.
HE DOES NOT SEE THE IMMENSE SHADOW THAT SWALLOWS HIM!
BUT HE DOES HEAR THE DULL, RYTHMIC HAMMERING AT THE AIR, A SOUND LIKE TATTERED CURTAINS MONOTONOUSLY PLAYING ETERNAL CHANTS FOR DAYS WHEN THEY WERE WHOLE.
K'RUEL LOOKS UP!
AND FOR AN INSTANT, HE IS ASTONISHED! HE IS A MAN WHO HAS FELT HIS FLESH DISINTEGRATE BURSTING INTO LIQUID BUBBLES, AND THEREFORE--
--HE DOES NOT ASTONISH EASILY.
SHADOWS ON THE SKYLINE, NIGHTMARES ON THE WING! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, OF COURSE, BUT IF IT ISN'T, HE ALREADY HAS AN ARROW FITTED INTO THE CROSSBOW TO MAKE SURE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
NICE AND EASY DOES IT, BIG FELLOW!
K'RUEL HEARS THE VOICE. HE DOES NOT UTTER A SNEERING, "CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS!"
BUT THE WORDS "PANTHER-DEVIL" ARE CLOSE ON HIS LIPS.
YOU'D BETTER MAKE THAT FIRST SHOT COUNT K'RUEL--
--BECAUSE YOU WON'T GET A CHANCE FOR A SECOND!
THE PTERODACTYL IS NOT AWARE THAT IT IS DEAD WHEN THE ARROW THUDS INTO ITS BRAIN. IT CONTINUES TO FLAP ITS WINGS, BUT THE EXPLOSIVES SPLATTER LIFE LIQUID AND LEATHERY HIDE OVER THE COMBATANTS.
I HOPE YOU WON'T THINK THIS UNSPORTING OF ME, K'RUEL, BUT THE LAST TIME WE TOUCHED, IT WAS A PIERCING EXPERIENCE!
NO HARD FEELINGS, I TRUST?
K'RUEL DOES NOT ANSWER.
HE CAN'T!


THE TREK BEGINS. DURING THE NEXT TWO DAYS, THE JOURNEY SEEMS ENDLESS. DELIRIUM SETS IN. THE SHROUDLIKE MISTS OF SERPENT VALLEY ARE FINALLY LEFT BEHIND, THE MIST COVERING THE VALLEY'S INTERIOR LIKE SUBCONSCIOUS SCAR TISSUE HIDING VICIOUS VISIONS.
DAYS AND NIGHTS BLEND.
RETURNING HOME.
HADN'T HE DONE THAT ONCE BEFORE?
HAS LIFE BECOME A CONTINUAL JOURNEY BACK HOME?
DAYS AND NIGHTS, HE DRAGS K'RUEL BEHIND HIM, DRIVING HIMSELF ONWARD.
THE NEXT SUMMIT. JUST REACH THE NEXT SUMMIT, HE TELLS HIMSELF, OVER AND OVER, AS IF HE WILL FORGET HIS OBJECTIVE.
PURPOSE AND SELF-DOUBT HOVER OVER HIM AS IF GAMBLERS WAITING FOR THE OUTCOME. THE GAMBLE IS AS ENDLESS AS THE TREK.
IN A MOMENT OF LUCIDITY HE REALIZES THE GAMBLERS ARE ALWAYS THERE, BUT SELDOM RECOGNIZED.
HOME! NO ONE SOUNDS ANY TRUMPETS OF TRIUMPH!
HE COLLAPSES BEFORE THE PALACE ROYAL AND BARELY FEELS MONICA'S TOUCH, GENTLY STROKING AT HIS TEMPLES.
TAKU, IT'S T'CHALLA. HE'S HURT! BADLY!
GO GET MENDINAO.
THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT MOVE. HE WANTS TO TELL HER OF SALVATION AND RESOLUTIONS--
--BUT NOW THAT HE'S FOUND THEM, THERE ISN'T ANY HURRY.
NONE AT ALL.
NEXT VENOMM RETURNS ALONG WITH OUR LETTERS PAGE, JUNGLE REACTIONS. WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR YOUR RESPONSE. TILL THEN, HANG IN THERE, PEOPLE!

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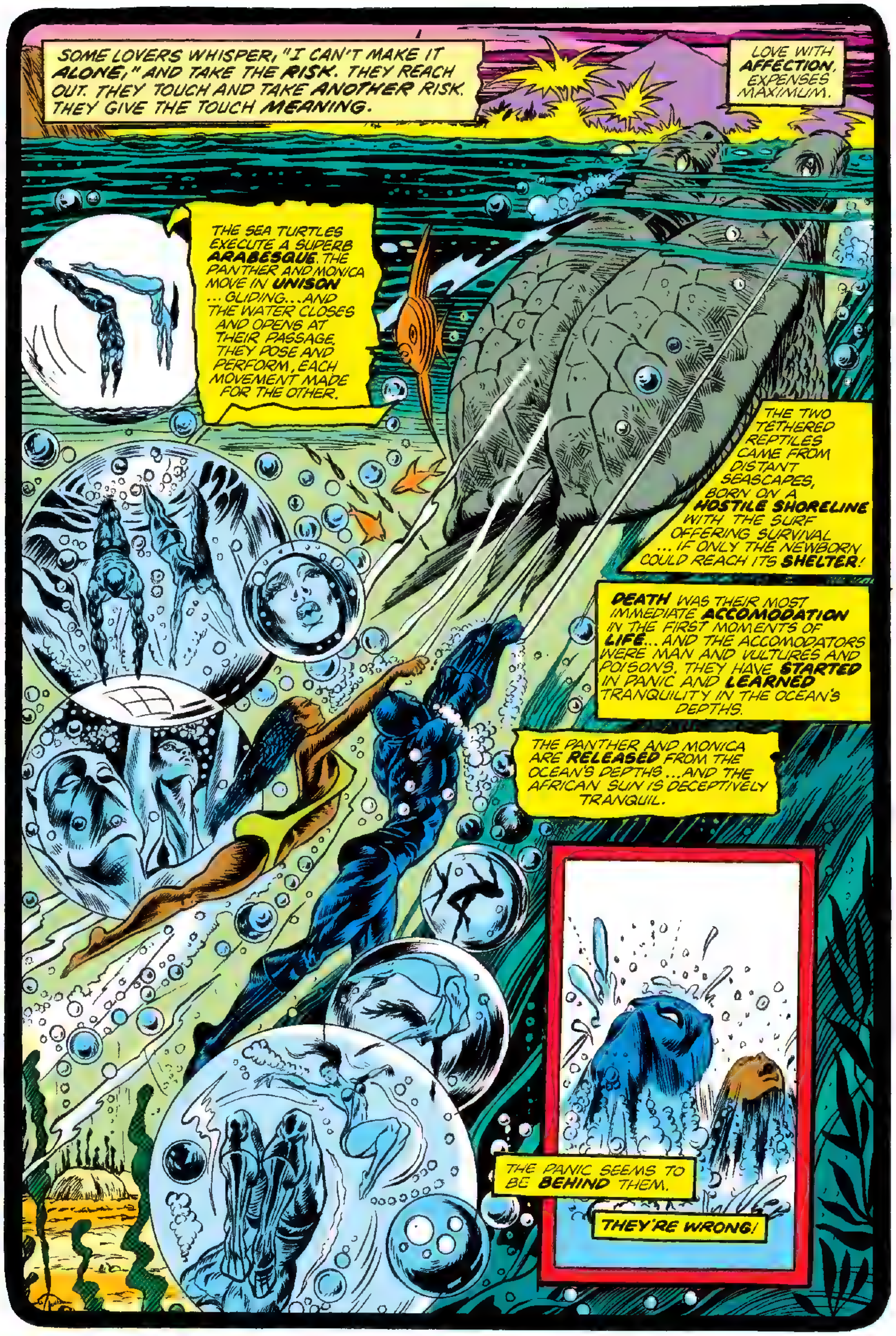
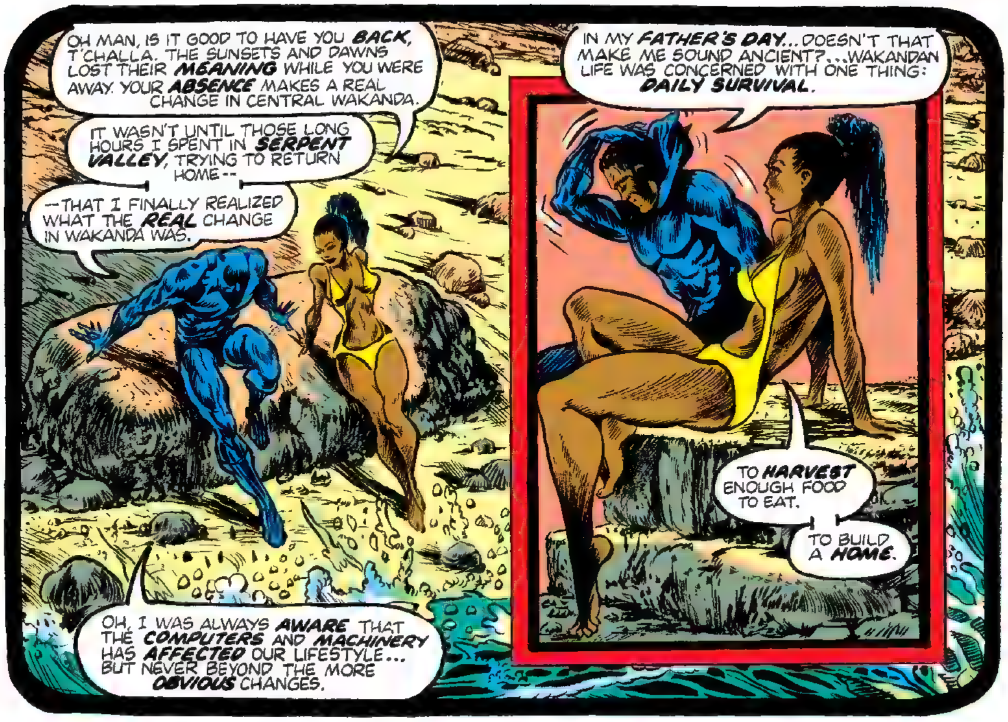
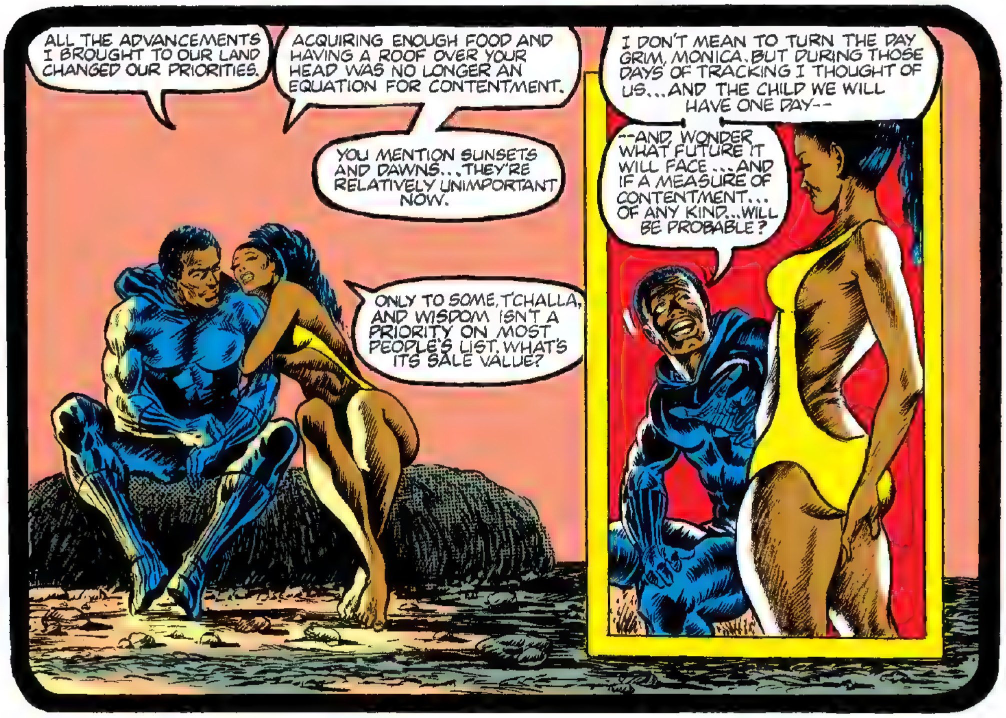
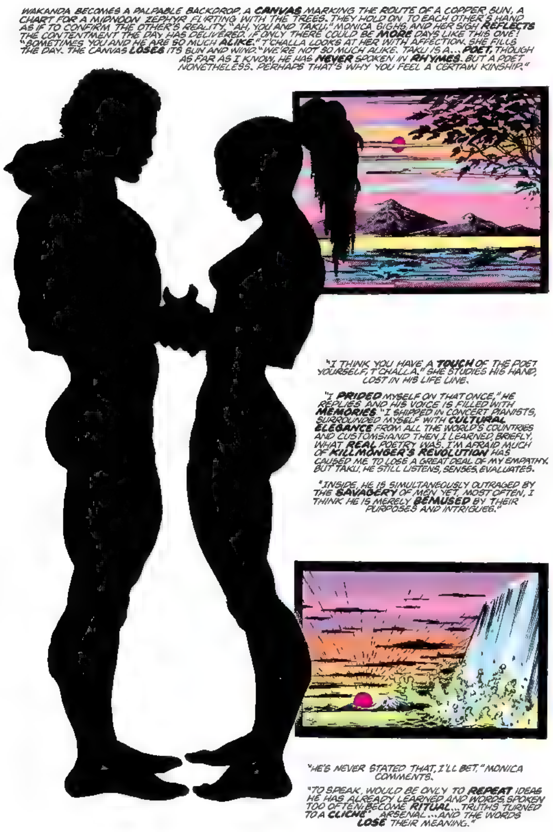
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
T'CHALLA BATTLES VENOMM IN A
RITUAL OF BLOOD!
A FEAST FOR THE SERPENTS!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: BLACK PANTHER!™
CONTINUING PANTHER'S RAGE: PART ELEVEN.
SOME LOVERS NEED REVOLUTIONS!
SOME LOVERS FORGE THEIR COMMITMENTS TO EACH OTHER WITH THE SAME COMPULSIVE FERVOR THEY USE IN PURSUING THEIR CAUSES. THE CHANTS AND SLOGANS ARE THEIR LOVE SONG.
THE BLACK PANTHER AND MONICA LYNNE FEEL THE WARM WATER CLOSE OVER THEIR HEADS AS THE MAGNIFICENT TURTLES SLASH DOWNWARD, OBLIVIOUS TO THEIR RIDERS' PRESENCE. THE CURRENT SWIRLS WITH TAUNTING TURQUOISE TREASURES RIPPLED BY SCARLET STREAKS. THE SETTING IS IDYLLIC POSTCARD PURITY COMBINED WITH THE FULFILLMENT OF ROMANTIC FANTASIES.
AND ALL OUR PAST DECADES HAVE SEEN REVOLUTIONS!
SOME LOVERS DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT REVOLUTIONS!
BUT REVOLUTIONS HAVE A WAY OF NOT BEING IGNORED!
WAR AND CAUSES AND SOCIETY DICTATES ARE INTRUDERS THAT THREATEN THEIR IDYLLIC MOMENTS. THE POSTCARD IS MARRED.
DON McGREGOR WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST
GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST
JANICE CHIANG LETTERER
LEN WEIN EDITOR

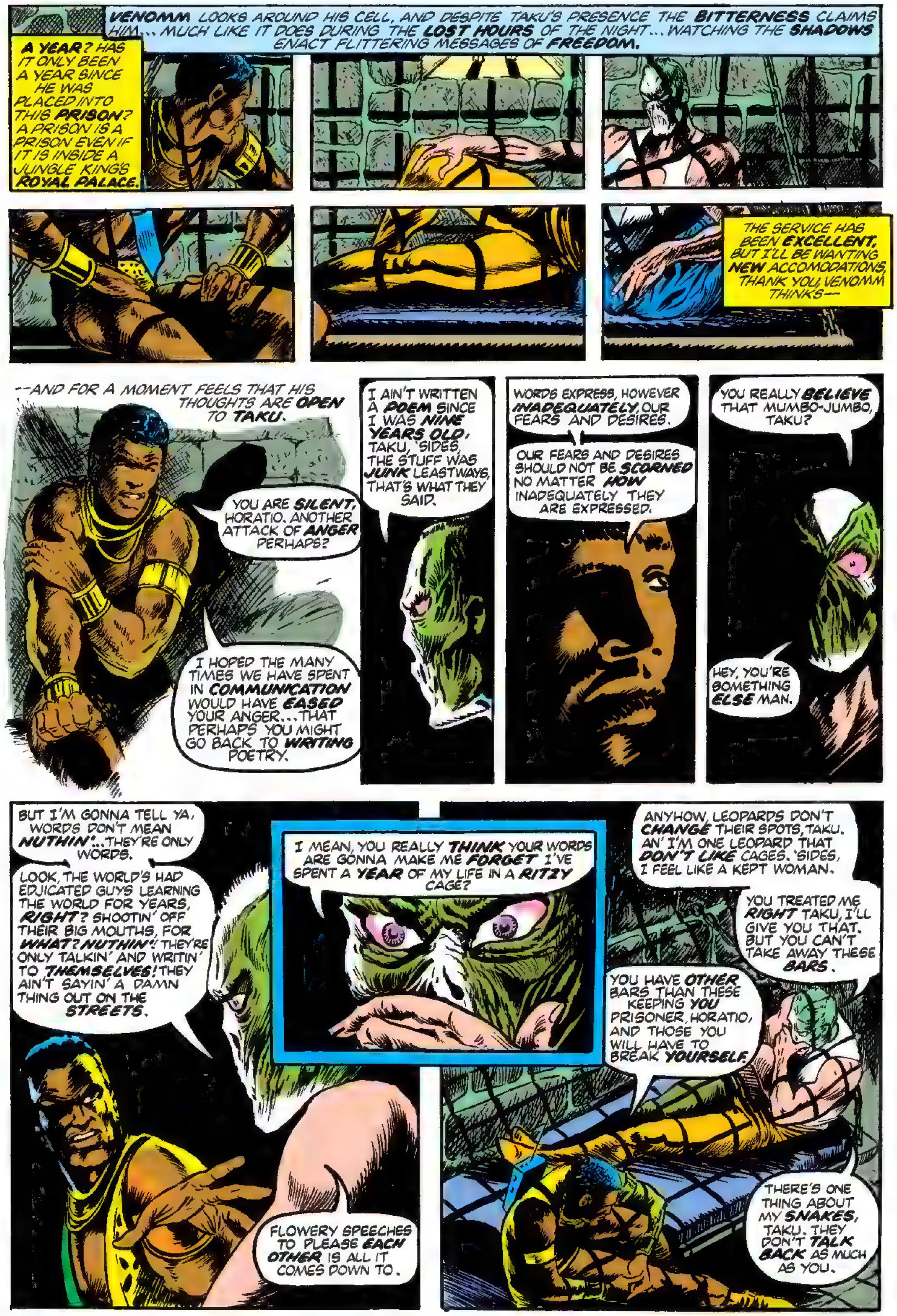

SOME LOVERS WHISPER, "I CAN'T MAKE IT ALONE," AND TAKE THE RISK. THEY REACH OUT. THEY TOUCH AND TAKE ANOTHER RISK. THEY GIVE THE TOUCH MEANING.
LOVE WITH AFFECTION. EXPENSES MAXIMUM.
THE SEA TURTLES EXECUTE A SUPERB ARABESQUE. THE PANTHER AND MONICA MOVE IN UNISON ... GLIDING... AND THE WATER CLOSES AND OPENS AT THEIR PASSAGE. THEY POSE AND PERFORM, EACH MOVEMENT MADE FOR THE OTHER.
THE TWO TETHERED REPTILES CAME FROM DISTANT SEASCAPES, BORN ON A HOSTILE SHORELINE WITH THE SURF OFFERING SURVIVAL ... IF ONLY THE NEWBORN COULD REACH ITS SHELTER!
DEATH WAS THEIR MOST IMMEDIATE ACCOMODATION IN THE FIRST MOMENTS OF LIFE... AND THE ACCOMODATORS WERE MAN AND VULTURES AND POISONS. THEY HAVE STARTED IN PANIC AND LEARNED TRANQUILITY IN THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS.
THE PANTHER AND MONICA ARE RELEASED FROM THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS ...AND THE AFRICAN SUN IS DECEPTIVELY TRANQUIL.
THE PANIC SEEMS TO BE BEHIND THEM.
THEY'RE WRONG!

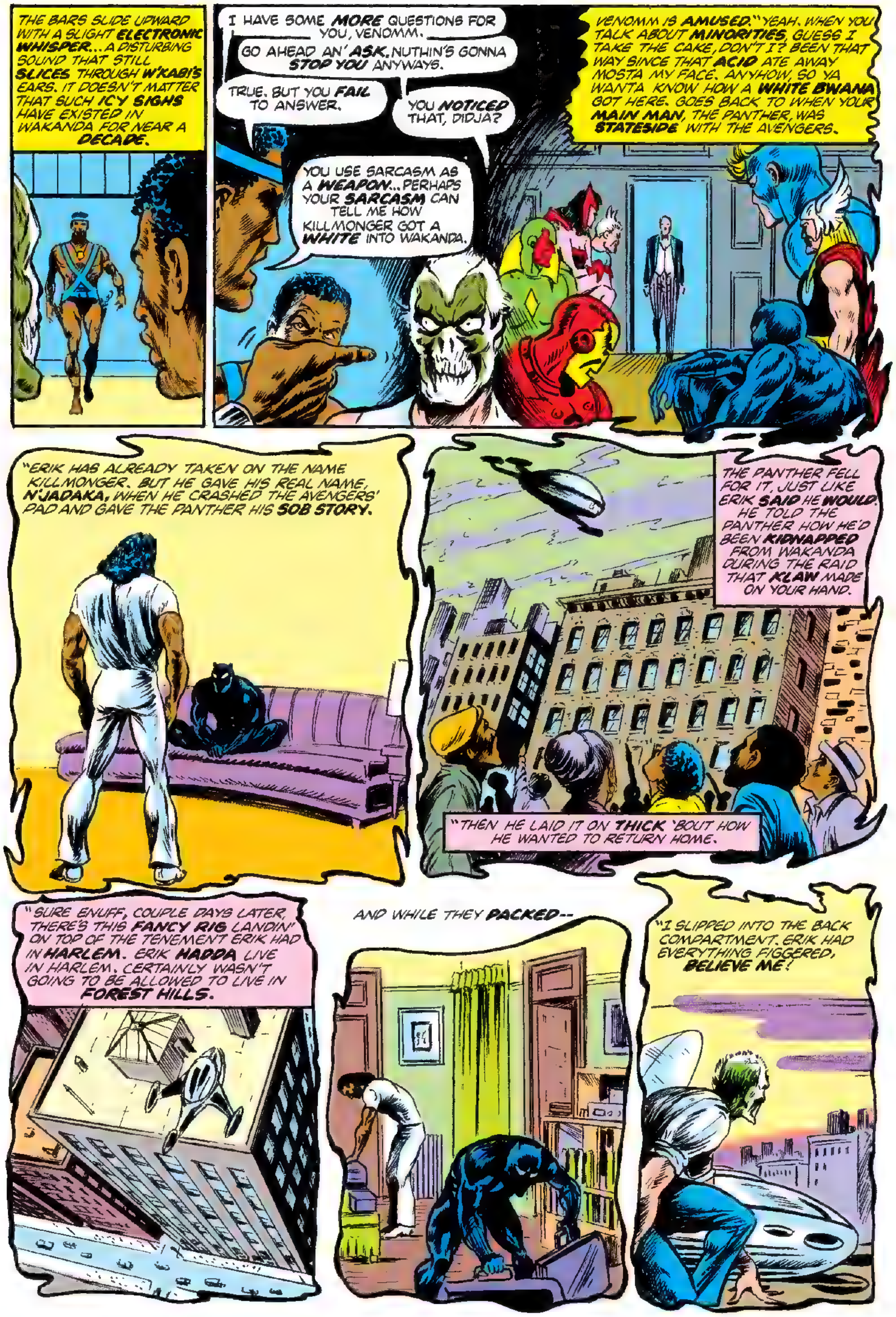

OH MAN, IS IT GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, T'CHALLA. THE SUNSETS AND DAWNS LOST THEIR MEANING WHILE YOU WERE AWAY. YOUR ABSENCE MAKES A REAL CHANGE IN CENTRAL WAKANDA.
IT WASN'T UNTIL THOSE LONG HOURS I SPENT IN SERPENT VALLEY, TRYING TO RETURN HOME--
--THAT I FINALLY REALIZED WHAT THE REAL CHANGE IN WAKANDA WAS.
OH, I WAS ALWAYS AWARE THAT THE COMPUTERS AND MACHINERY HAS AFFECTED OUR LIFESTYLE... BUT NEVER BEYOND THE MORE OBVIOUS CHANGES.
IN MY FATHER'S DAY... DOESN'T THAT MAKE ME SOUND ANCIENT?... WAKANDAN LIFE WAS CONCERNED WITH ONE THING: DAILY SURVIVAL.
TO HARVEST ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT.
TO BUILD A HOME.


ALL THE ADVANCEMENTS I BROUGHT TO OUR LAND CHANGED OUR PRIORITIES.
ACQUIRING ENOUGH FOOD AND HAVING A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD WAS NO LONGER AN EQUATION FOR CONTENTMENT.
YOU MENTION SUNSETS AND DAWNS... THEY'RE RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT NOW.
ONLY TO SOME, T'CHALLA. AND WISDOM ISN'T A PRIORITY ON MOST PEOPLE'S LIST. WHAT'S ITS SALE VALUE?
I DON'T MEAN TO TURN THE DAY GRIM, MONICA. BUT DURING THOSE DAYS OF TRACKING I THOUGHT OF US... AND THE CHILD WE WILL HAVE ONE DAY--
--AND WONDER WHAT FUTURE IT WILL FACE... AND IF A MEASURE OF CONTENTMENT... OF ANY KIND... WILL BE PROBABLE?


WAKANDA BECOMES A PALPABLE BACKDROP, A CANVAS MARKING THE ROUTE OF A COPPER SUN, A CHART FOR A MIDNOON ZEPHYR FLIRTING WITH THE TREES. THEY HOLD ON TO EACH OTHER'S HAND AS IF TO CONFIRM THE OTHER'S REALITY. "AH, YOU AND TAKU," MONICA SIGHS, AND HER SIGH REFLECTS THE CONTENTMENT THE DAY HAS DELIVERED. IF ONLY THERE COULD BE MORE DAYS LIKE THIS ONE! "SOMETIMES YOU AND HE ARE SO MUCH ALIKE." T'CHALLA LOOKS AT HER WITH AFFECTION. SHE FILLS THE DAY. THE CANVAS LOSES ITS SUN AND WIND. "WE'RE NOT SO MUCH ALIKE. TAKU IS A... POET, THOUGH AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE HAS NEVER SPOKEN IN RHYMES. BUT A POET NONETHELESS. PERHAPS THAT'S WHY YOU FEEL A CERTAIN KINSHIP."
"I THINK YOU HAVE A TOUCH OF THE POET YOURSELF, T'CHALLA." SHE STUDIES HIS HAND, LOST IN HIS LIFE LINE.
"I PRIDED MYSELF ON THAT ONCE," HE REPLIES AND HIS VOICE IS FILLED WITH MEMORIES. "I SHIPPED IN CONCERT PIANISTS, SURROUNDED MYSELF WITH CULTURAL ELEGANCE FROM ALL THE WORLD'S COUNTRIES AND CUSTOMS; AND THEN, I LEARNED, BRIEFLY, WHAT REAL POETRY WAS. I'M AFRAID MUCH OF KILLMONGER'S REVOLUTION HAS CAUSED ME TO LOSE A GREAT DEAL OF MY EMPATHY. BUT TAKU, HE STILL LISTENS, SENSES, EVALUATES.
"INSIDE, HE IS SIMULTANEOUSLY OUTRAGED BY THE SAVAGERY OF MEN YET, MOST OFTEN, I THINK HE IS MERELY BEMUSED BY THEIR PURPOSES AND INTRIGUES."
"HE'S NEVER STATED THAT, I'LL BET," MONICA COMMENTS.
"TO SPEAK, WOULD BE ONLY TO REPEAT IDEAS HE HAS ALREADY LEARNED AND WORDS, SPOKEN TOO OFTEN, BECOME RITUAL... TRUTHS TURNED TO A CLICHE' ARSENAL... AND THE WORDS LOSE THEIR MEANING."

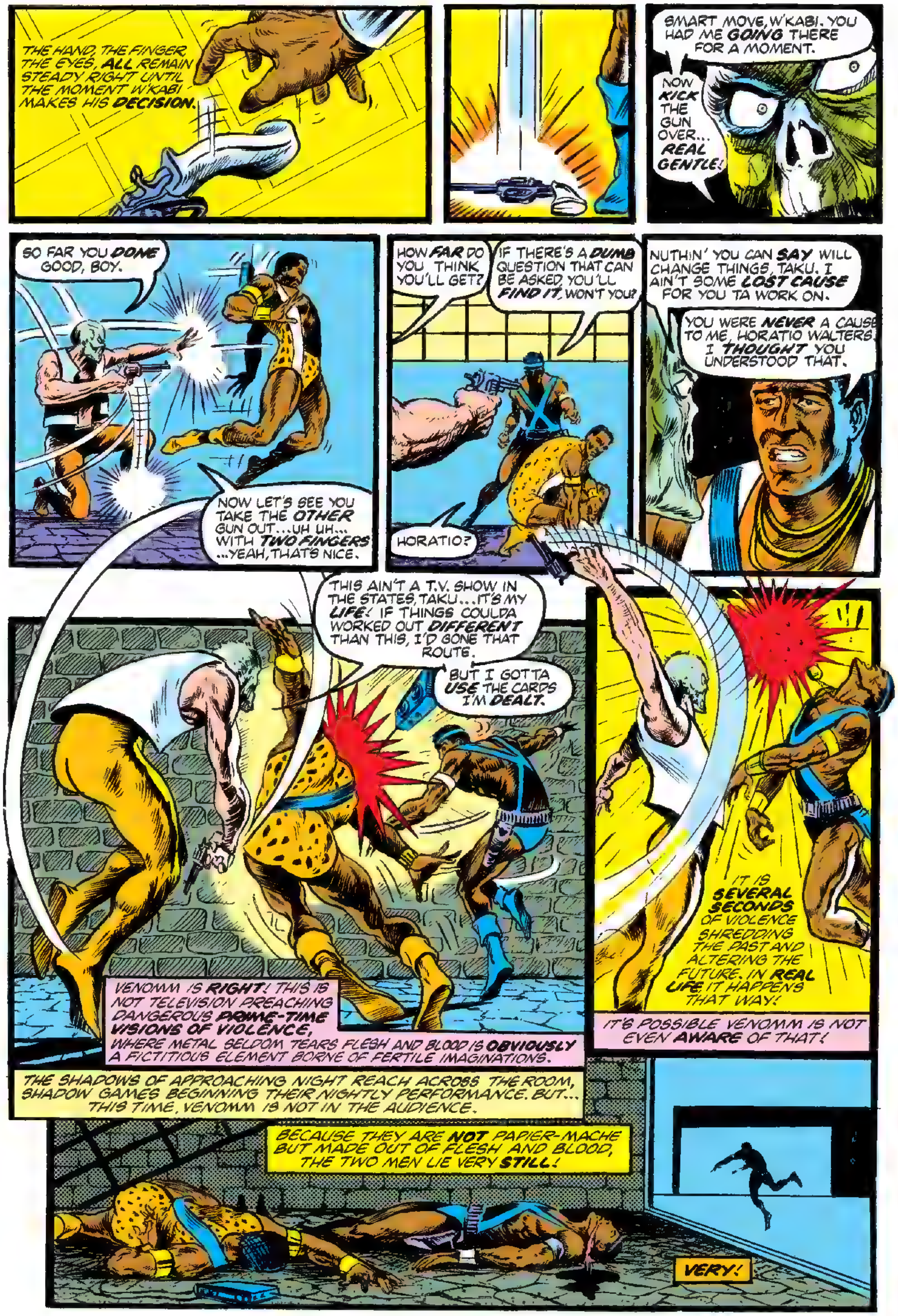
YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU'RE WET.
ARE YOU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING CORNY?
YES. AND THE CRITICS WILL HOWL, BUT LOVERS DON'T NEED CRITICS--
--AND CRITICS DON'T NEED LOVERS.
VERY PROFOUND, MY JUNGLE LORD.
SHOULD WE PLAY TARZAN? AMERICANS LOVE TARZAN, DON'T THEY?
I PREFER OTHER TYPES OF PLAY.
AND I JUST WANTED TO SAY... I THINK YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, TOO.

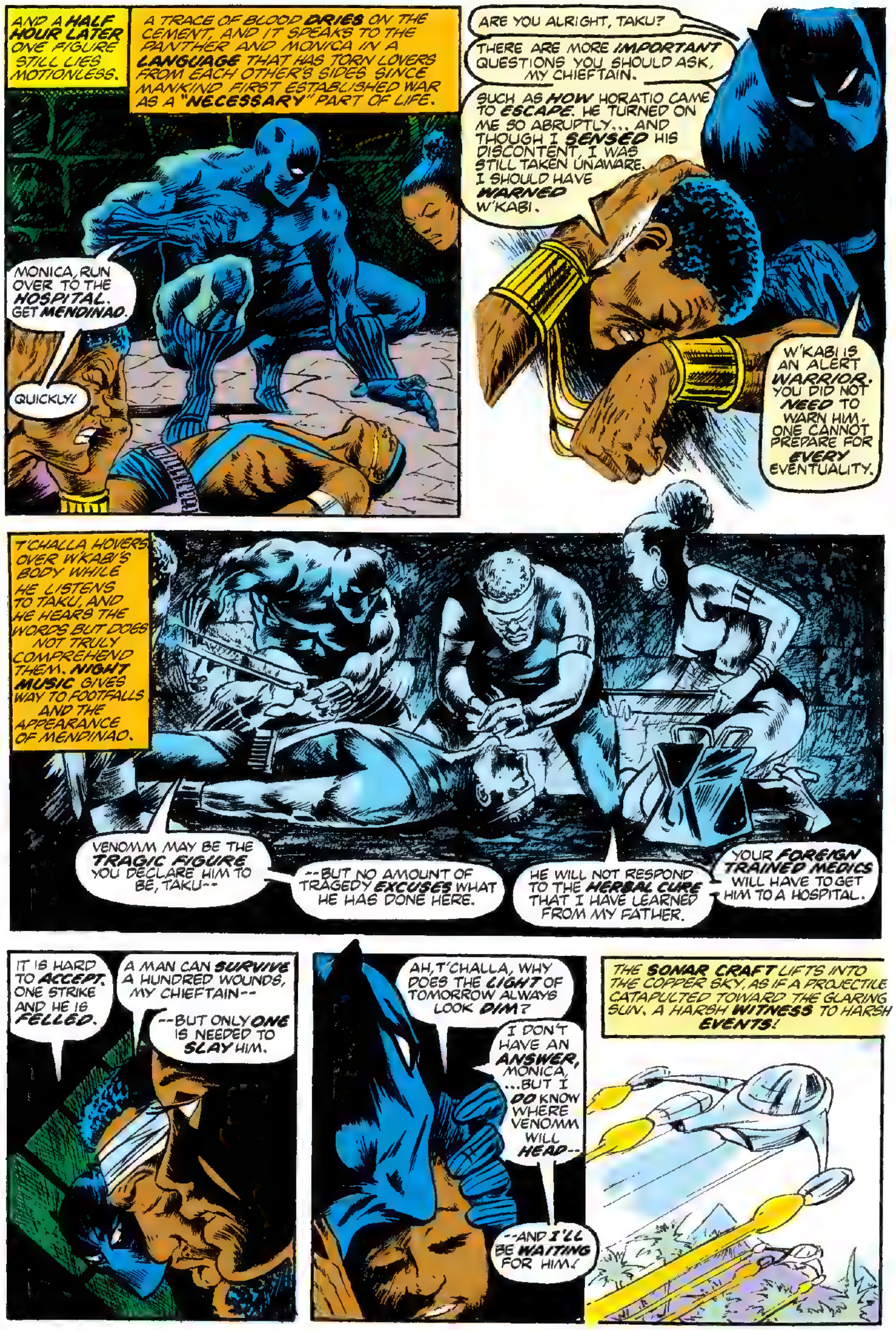

VENOMM LOOKS AROUND HIS CELL, AND DESPITE TAKU'S PRESENCE THE BITTERNESS CLAIMS HIM... MUCH LIKE IT DOES DURING THE LOST HOURS OF THE NIGHT... WATCHING THE SHADOWS ENACT FLITTERING MESSAGES OF FREEDOM.
A YEAR? HAS IT ONLY BEEN A YEAR SINCE HE WAS PLACED INTO THIS PRISON? A PRISON IS A PRISON EVEN IF IT IS INSIDE A JUNGLE KING'S ROYAL PALACE.
THE SERVICE HAS BEEN EXCELLENT, BUT I'LL BE WANTING NEW ACCOMODATIONS, THANK YOU, VENOMM THINKS--
--AND FOR A MOMENT FEELS THAT HIS THOUGHTS ARE OPEN TO TAKU.
YOU ARE SILENT, HORATIO. ANOTHER ATTACK OF ANGER PERHAPS?
I HOPED THE MANY TIMES WE HAVE SPENT IN COMMUNICATION WOULD HAVE EASED YOUR ANGER... THAT PERHAPS YOU MIGHT GO BACK TO WRITING POETRY.
I AIN'T WRITTEN A POEM SINCE I WAS NINE YEARS OLD, TAKU. 'SIDES, THE STUFF WAS JUNK LEASTWAYS, THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID.
WORDS EXPRESS, HOWEVER INADEQUATELY, OUR FEARS AND DESIRES.
OUR FEARS AND DESIRES SHOULD NOT BE SCORNED NO MATTER HOW INADEQUATELY THEY ARE EXPRESSED.
YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT MUMBO-JUMBO, TAKU?
HEY, YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE MAN.
BUT I'M GONNA TELL YA, WORDS DON'T MEAN NUTHIN'... THEY'RE ONLY WORDS.
LOOK, THE WORLD'S HAD EDJICATED GUYS LEARNING THE WORLD FOR YEARS, RIGHT? SHOOTIN' OFF THEIR BIG MOUTHS, FOR WHAT? NUTHIN'! THEY'RE ONLY TALKIN' AND WRITIN' TO THEMSELVES! THEY AIN'T SAYIN' A DAMN THING OUT ON THE STREETS.
I MEAN, YOU REALLY THINK YOUR WORDS ARE GONNA MAKE ME FORGET I'VE SPENT A YEAR OF MY LIFE IN A RITZY CAGE?
FLOWERY SPEECHES TO PLEASE EACH OTHER IS ALL IT COMES DOWN TO.
ANYHOW, LEOPARDS DON'T CHANGE THEIR SPOTS, TAKU. AN' I'M ONE LEOPARD THAT DON'T LIKE CAGES. 'SIDES, I FEEL LIKE A KEPT WOMAN.
YOU TREATED ME RIGHT TAKU, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE AWAY THESE BARS.
YOU HAVE OTHER BARS THAN THESE KEEPING YOU PRISONER, HORATIO, AND THOSE YOU WILL HAVE TO BREAK YOURSELF.
THERE'S ONE THING ABOUT MY SNAKES, TAKU. THEY DON'T TALK BACK AS MUCH AS YOU.

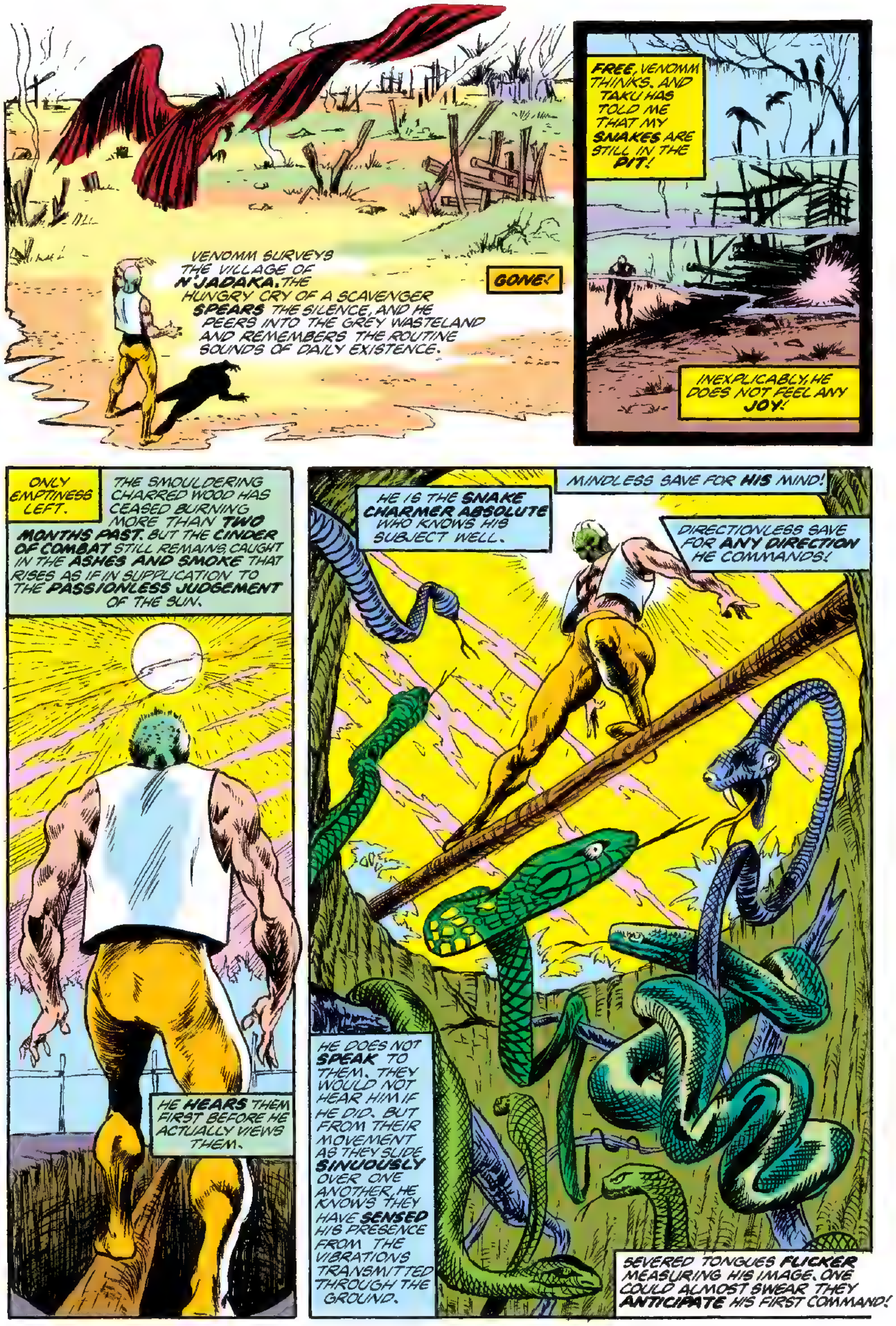

THE BARS SLIDE UPWARD WITH A SLIGHT ELECTRONIC WHISPER... A DISTURBING SOUND THAT STILL SLICES THROUGH W'KABI'S EARS. IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT SUCH ICY SIGHS HAVE EXISTED IN WAKANDA FOR NEAR A DECADE.
I HAVE SOME MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOU, VENOMM.
GO AHEAD AN' ASK. NUTHIN'S GONNA STOP YOU ANYWAYS.
TRUE. BUT YOU FAIL TO ANSWER.
YOU NOTICED THAT, DIDJA?
YOU USE SARCASM AS A WEAPON... PERHAPS YOUR SARCASM CAN TELL ME HOW KILLMONGER GOT A WHITE INTO WAKANDA.
VENOMM IS AMUSED. "YEAH. WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT MINORITIES, GUESS I TAKE THE CAKE, DON'T I? BEEN THAT WAY SINCE THAT ACID ATE AWAY MOSTA MY FACE. ANYHOW, SO YA WANTA KNOW HOW A WHITE BWANA GOT HERE. GOES BACK TO WHEN YOUR MAIN MAN, THE PANTHER, WAS STATESIDE WITH THE AVENGERS.
"ERIK HAS ALREADY TAKEN ON THE NAME KILLMONGER. BUT HE GAVE HIS REAL NAME, N'JADAKA, WHEN HE CRASHED THE AVENGERS' PAD AND GAVE THE PANTHER HIS SOB STORY.
THE PANTHER FELL FOR IT, JUST LIKE ERIK SAID HE WOULD. HE TOLD THE PANTHER HOW HE'D BEEN KIDNAPPED FROM WAKANDA DURING THE RAID THAT KLAW MADE ON YOUR HAND.
"THEN HE LAID IT ON THICK 'BOUT HOW HE WANTED TO RETURN HOME.
"SURE ENUFF, COUPLE DAYS LATER, THERE'S THIS FANCY RIG LANDIN' ON TOP OF THE TENEMENT ERIK HAD IN HARLEM. ERIK HADDA LIVE IN HARLEM. CERTAINLY WASN'T GOING TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE IN FOREST HILLS.
AND WHILE THEY PACKED--
"I SLIPPED INTO THE BACK COMPARTMENT. ERIK HAD EVERYTHING FIGGERED, BELIEVE ME!

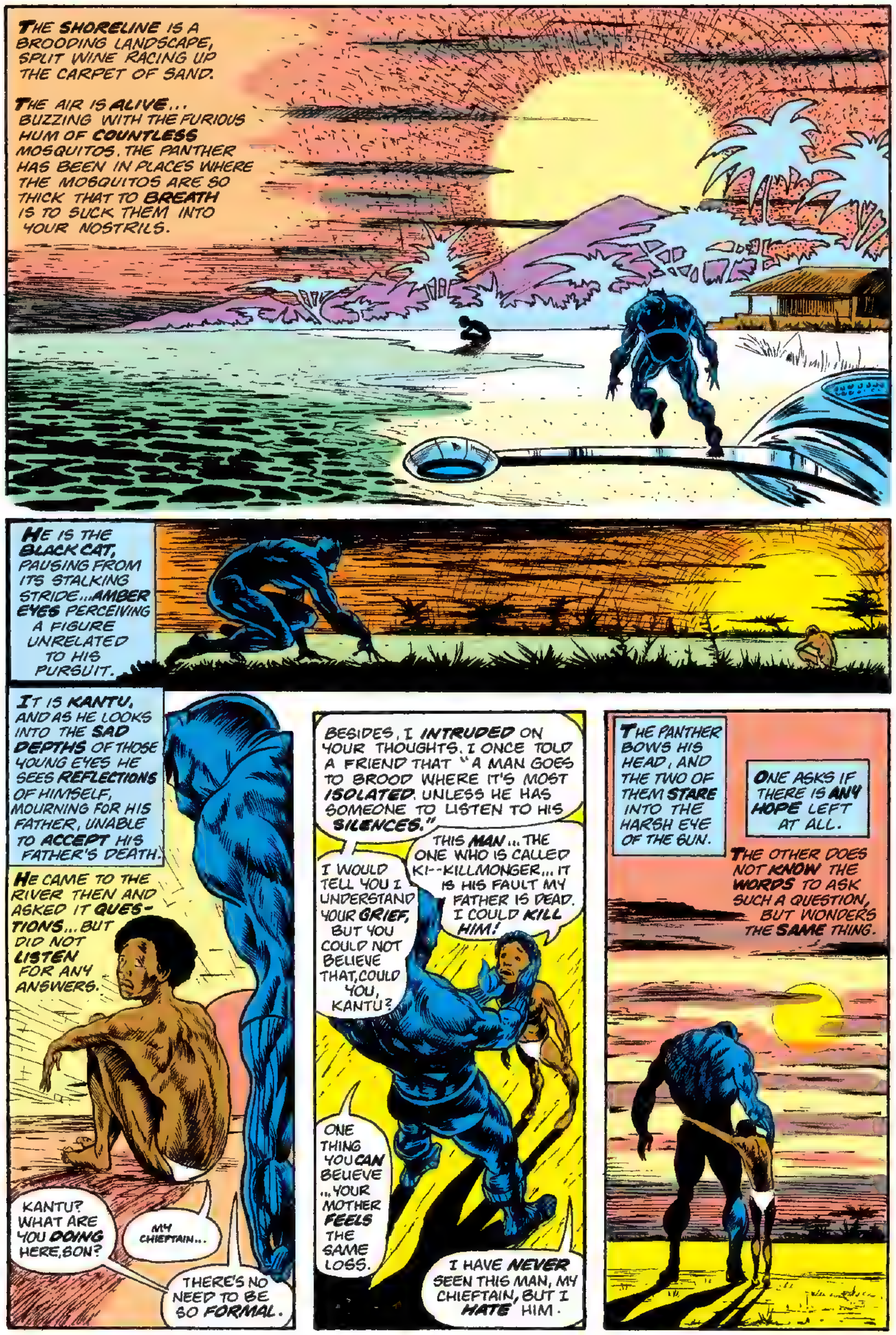
"ALL THE TIME THE PANTHER WAS HELPIN' ERIK MOVE THINGS, ERIK PLAYED IT STRAIGHT. NEVER LET ON ONCE HOW MUCH HE HATED THE PANTHER'S GUTS.
"YOU HAVE NEVER TOLD US WHY YOUR LEADER HATES OUR CHIEFTAIN WITH SUCH FURY," W'KABI PROBES INTENSELY.
"IT REALLY STARTED WHEN T'CHALLA'S OLD MAN WHO FIRST STARTED USING THIS STUFF YOU HAVE ON THE GROUND --WHAT'S IT CALLED?"
"VIBRANIUM," TAKU OFFERS PLACIDLY.
"YEAH, THAT STUFF. ERIK ALWAYS BLAMED THAT WHOLE SCENE WHERE HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY KLAW'S MEN ON ... I FORGET THE NAME OF T'CHALLA'S OLD MAN."
W'KABI TENSES AT SUCH DISRESPECT. "T'CHAKA," HE ANSWERS.
"YEAH, HIM," VENOMM CONTINUES. "KLAW'S MEN KILLED ERIK'S MOTHER AND FATHER RIGHT IN FRONT'A HIM. SINCE THAT TIME ERIK WAS KINDA LIKE THE KID IN THEM OLD WESTERNS WHO DON'T THINK OF NUTHIN' BUT WASTIN' THE BAD GUYS.
"I MUSTA SEEN THAT PITCHER A MILLYUN TIMES," VENOMM SAYS FONDLY.
"ANYHOW, WITH ALL THE JUNK ERIK BROUGHT ON BOARD THE PLANE, THE PANTHER NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED I WAS WHAT'CHA CALL A STOWAWAY.
"THAT'S LIKE WHEN YOU HIDE ON A SHIP AN' NOBODY KNOWS YOU'RE THERE."
A KNIFE BLADE CARVES THE AIR AS HIS ARM LOCKS AROUND TAKU'S THROAT--
VENOMM HAS HARDLY FINISHED SPEAKING THE SENTENCE WHEN HE LEAPS!
--AND W'KABI'S DRAWN WEAPON IS AIMED AT A HUMAN SHIELD.

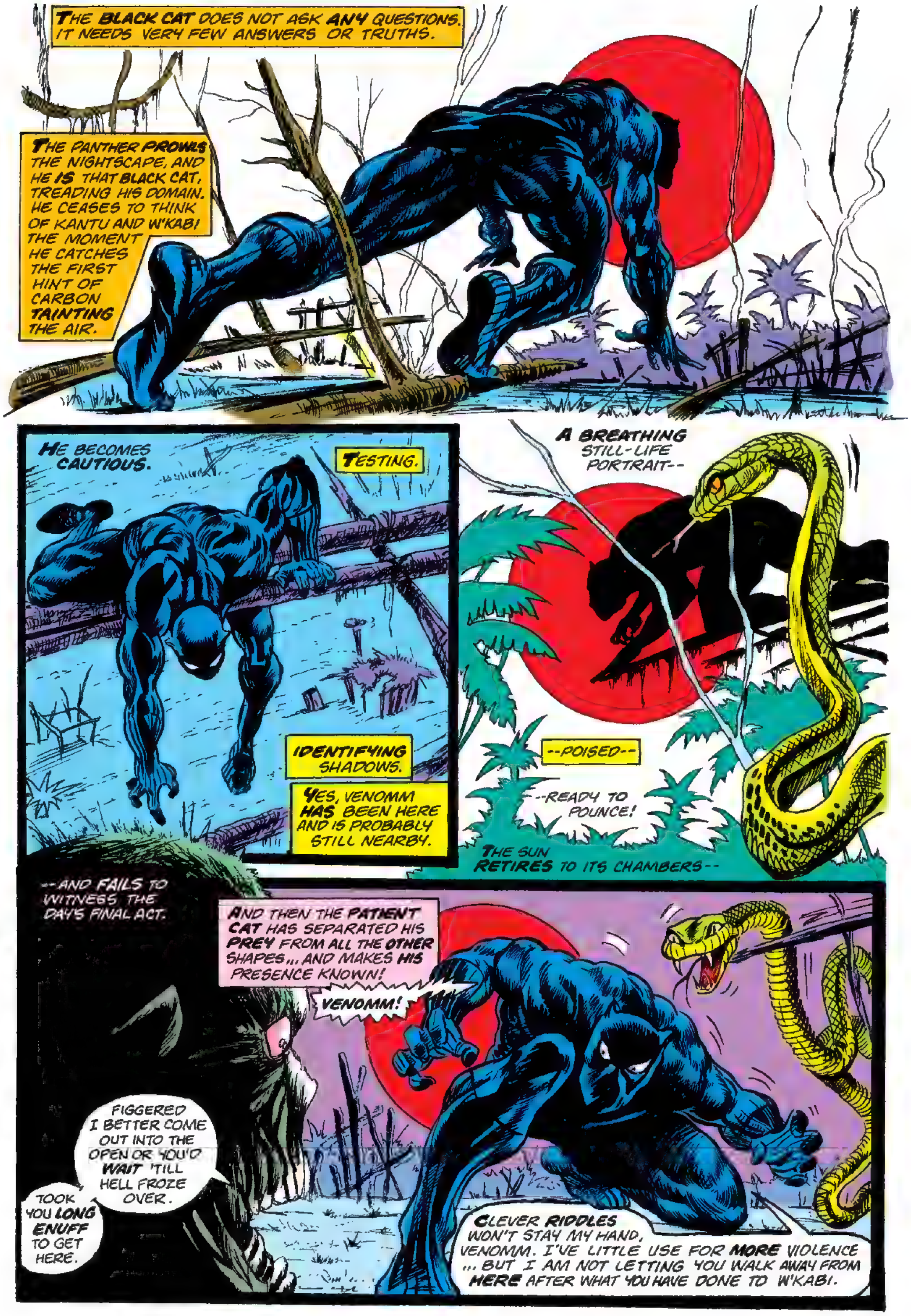
W'KABI'S FINGER TIGHTENS ON THE SMOOTH, CURVED INSIDE OF THE TRIGGER--
--AND THE METAL IS SLICK WITH HIS SWEAT!
SURE, GO AHEAD, W'KABI. WHYN'T YOU PULL THE TRIGGER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I WON'T, VENOMM?
COME OFF IT, MAN. YOU AIN'T GONNA BLOW TAKU AWAY JUST TO NAIL MY HIDE.
YOU ARE COUNTING ON ME NOT TO BE AS RUTHLESS AS YOU ARE, VENOMM.
BUT YOU HAVE MADE A MISTAKE IF YOU THINK I AM ANYTHING LIKE TAKU.
IF YOU MAKE ONE WRONG MOVE... JUST ONE!
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE ANY WRONG MOVE W'KABI--
--AN' YOUR TIME HAS RUN OUT. THROW DOWN THE GUN!
HORATIO, YOU FLEE DEEPER INTO YOUR MAZE OF SELF-IMPRISONMENT.
TAKU, I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU. YOU SURE GOT SOME COOL.
BUT I SCARE YOU, DON'T I, W'KABI? AND I SHOULD!
I'LL USE THIS BLADE. YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT HIS WINDPIPE LOOKS LIKE? YOU JUST KEEP HOLDIN' ONTO THAT GUN!
THE HAMMER MOVES BACKWARD EVER SO SLOWLY. IT IS NEAR ITS LIMIT. ANOTHER OUNCE OF PRESSURE ON THE TRIGGER AND IT WILL SEND ITS MISSILE SCREAMING INTO THE ROOM.
VENOMM TRIES TO READ W'KABI'S EYES!...
HE WON'T PULL THE TRIGGER! HE WON'T DARE!
BUT THEN HE SEES THE DANGEROUS FIRE IN W'KABI'S EYES... AND HE IS NOT SO SURE!


THE HAND, THE FINGER, THE EYES, ALL REMAIN STEADY RIGHT UNTIL THE MOMENT W'KABI MAKES HIS DECISION.
SMART MOVE, W'KABI. YOU HAD ME GOING THERE FOR A MOMENT.
NOW KICK THE GUN OVER... REAL GENTLE!
SO FAR YOU DONE GOOD, BOY.
NOW LET'S SEE YOU TAKE THE OTHER GUN OUT...UH UH... WITH TWO FINGERS ...YEAH, THAT'S NICE.
HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU'LL GET?
IF THERE'S A DUMB QUESTION THAT CAN BE ASKED, YOU'LL FIND IT, WON'T YOU?
HORATIO?
NUTHIN' YOU CAN SAY WILL CHANGE THINGS, TAKU. I AIN'T SOME LOST CAUSE FOR YOU TA WORK ON.
YOU WERE NEVER A CAUSE TO ME, HORATIO WALTERS! I THOUGHT YOU UNDERSTOOD THAT.
THIS AIN'T A T.V. SHOW IN THE STATES, TAKU...IT'S MY LIFE! IF THINGS COULDA WORKED OUT DIFFERENT THAN THIS, I'D GONE THAT ROUTE.
BUT I GOTTA USE THE CARDS I'M DEALT.
VENOMM IS RIGHT! THIS IS NOT TELEVISION PREACHING DANGEROUS PRIME-TIME VISIONS OF VIOLENCE, WHERE METAL SELDOM TEARS FLESH AND BLOOD IS OBVIOUSLY A FICTITIOUS ELEMENT BORNE OF FERTILE IMAGINATIONS.
IT IS SEVERAL SECONDS OF VIOLENCE SHREDDING THE PAST AND ALTERING THE FUTURE. IN REAL LIFE IT HAPPENS THAT WAY!
IT'S POSSIBLE VENOMM IS NOT EVEN AWARE OF THAT!
THE SHADOWS OF APPROACHING NIGHT REACH ACROSS THE ROOM, SHADOW GAMES BEGINNING THEIR NIGHTLY PERFORMANCE. BUT... THIS TIME, VENOMM IS NOT IN THE AUDIENCE.
BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT PAPIER-MACHE BUT MADE OUT OF FLESH AND BLOOD, THE TWO MEN LIE VERY STILL!
VERY!

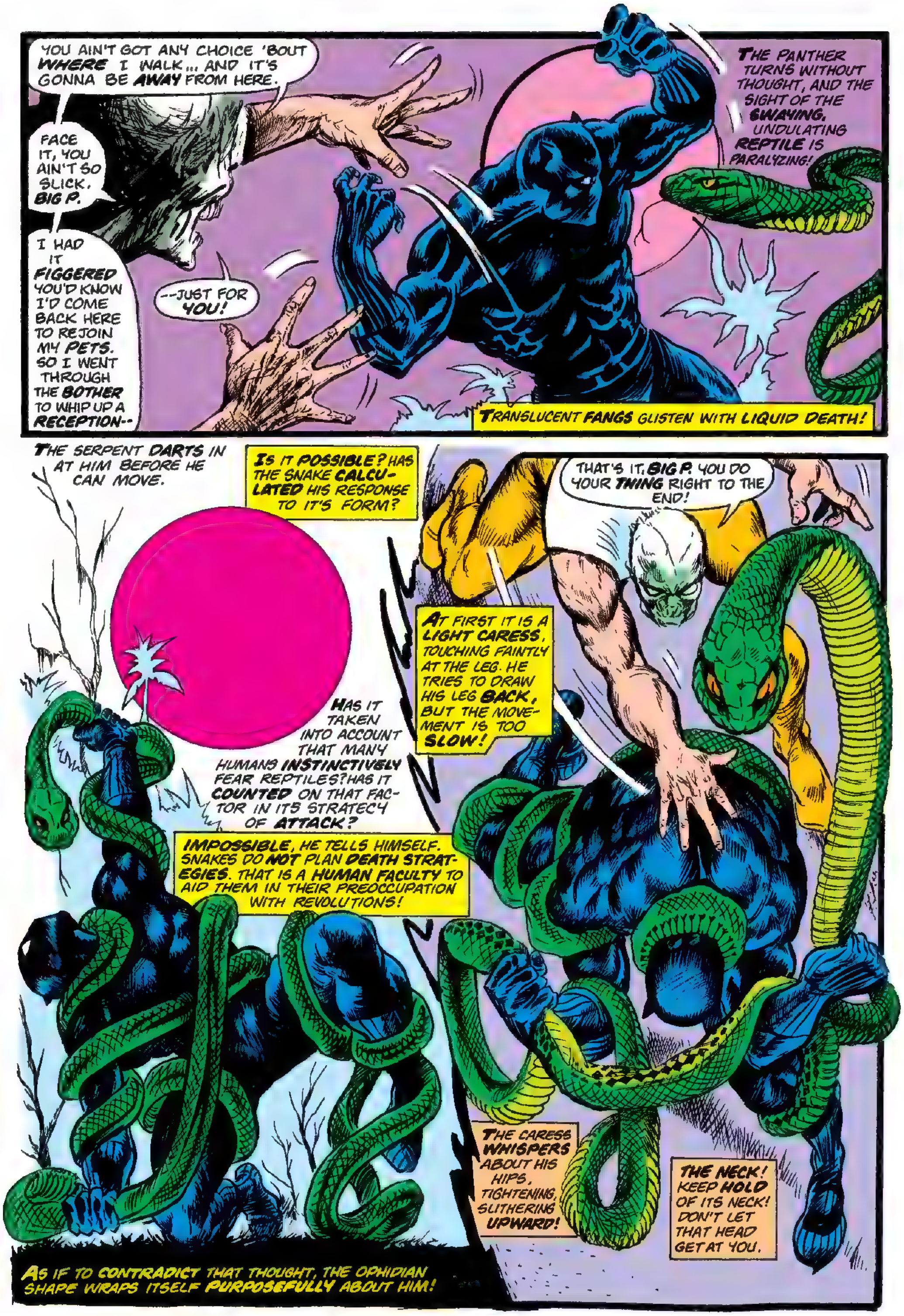

AND A HALF HOUR LATER ONE FIGURE STILL LIES MOTIONLESS.
A TRACE OF BLOOD DRIES ON THE CEMENT, AND IT SPEAKS TO THE PANTHER AND MONICA IN A LANGUAGE THAT HAS TORN LOVERS FROM EACH OTHER'S SIDES SINCE MANKIND FIRST ESTABLISHED WAR AS A "NECESSARY" PART OF LIFE.
MONICA, RUN OVER TO THE HOSPITAL. GET MENDINAO.
QUICKLY!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, TAKU?
THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK, MY CHIEFTAIN.
SUCH AS HOW HORATIO CAME TO ESCAPE. HE TURNED ON ME SO ABRUPTLY... AND THOUGH I SENSED HIS DISCONTENT, I WAS STILL TAKEN UNAWARE. I SHOULD HAVE WARNED W'KABI.
W'KABI IS AN ALERT WARRIOR. YOU DID NOT NEED TO WARN HIM. ONE CANNOT PREPARE FOR EVERY EVENTUALITY.
T'CHALLA HOVERS OVER W'KABI'S BODY WHILE HE LISTENS TO TAKU, AND HE HEARS THE WORDS BUT DOES NOT TRULY COMPREHEND THEM. NIGHT MUSIC GIVES WAY TO FOOTFALLS AND THE APPEARANCE OF MENDINAO.
VENOMM MAY BE THE TRAGIC FIGURE YOU DECLARE HIM TO BE, TAKU--
--BUT NO AMOUNT OF TRAGEDY EXCUSES WHAT HE HAS DONE HERE.
HE WILL NOT RESPOND TO THE HERBAL CURE THAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY FATHER.
YOUR FOREIGN TRAINED MEDICS WILL HAVE TO GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL.
IT IS HARD TO ACCEPT. ONE STRIKE AND HE IS FELLED.
A MAN CAN SURVIVE A HUNDRED WOUNDS, MY CHIEFTAIN--
--BUT ONLY ONE IS NEEDED TO SLAY HIM.
AH, T'CHALLA, WHY DOES THE LIGHT OF TOMORROW ALWAYS LOOK DIM?
I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER, MONICA, ...BUT I DO KNOW WHERE VENOMM WILL HEAD--
--AND I'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM!
THE SONAR CRAFT LIFTS INTO THE COPPER SKY, AS IF A PROJECTILE CATAPULTED TOWARD THE GLARING SUN, A HARSH WITNESS TO HARSH EVENTS!


VENOMM SURVEYS THE VILLAGE OF N'JADAKA. THE HUNGRY CRY OF A SCAVENGER SPEARS THE SILENCE, AND HE PEERS INTO THE GREY WASTELAND AND REMEMBERS THE ROUTINE SOUNDS OF DAILY EXISTENCE.
GONE!
FREE, VENOMM THINKS. AND TAKU HAS TOLD ME THAT MY SNAKES ARE STILL IN THE PIT!
INEXPLICABLY, HE DOES NOT FEEL ANY JOY!
ONLY EMPTINESS LEFT.
THE SMOULDERING CHARRED WOOD HAS CEASED BURNING MORE THAN TWO MONTHS PAST. BUT THE CINDER OF COMBAT STILL REMAINS, CAUGHT IN THE ASHES AND SMOKE THAT RISES AS IF IN SUPPLICATION TO THE PASSIONLESS JUDGEMENT OF THE SUN.
HE HEARS THEM FIRST BEFORE HE ACTUALLY VIEWS THEM.
MINDLESS SAVE FOR HIS MIND!
HE IS THE SNAKE CHARMER ABSOLUTE WHO KNOWS HIS SUBJECT WELL.
DIRECTIONLESS SAVE FOR ANY DIRECTION HE COMMANDS!
HE DOES NOT SPEAK TO THEM. THEY WOULD NOT HEAR HIM IF HE DID. BUT FROM THEIR MOVEMENT AS THEY SLIDE SINUOUSLY OVER ONE ANOTHER, HE KNOWS THEY HAVE SENSED HIS PRESENCE FROM THE VIBRATIONS TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE GROUND.
SEVERED TONGUES FLICKER MEASURING HIS IMAGE. ONE COULD ALMOST SWEAR THEY ANTICIPATE HIS FIRST COMMAND!

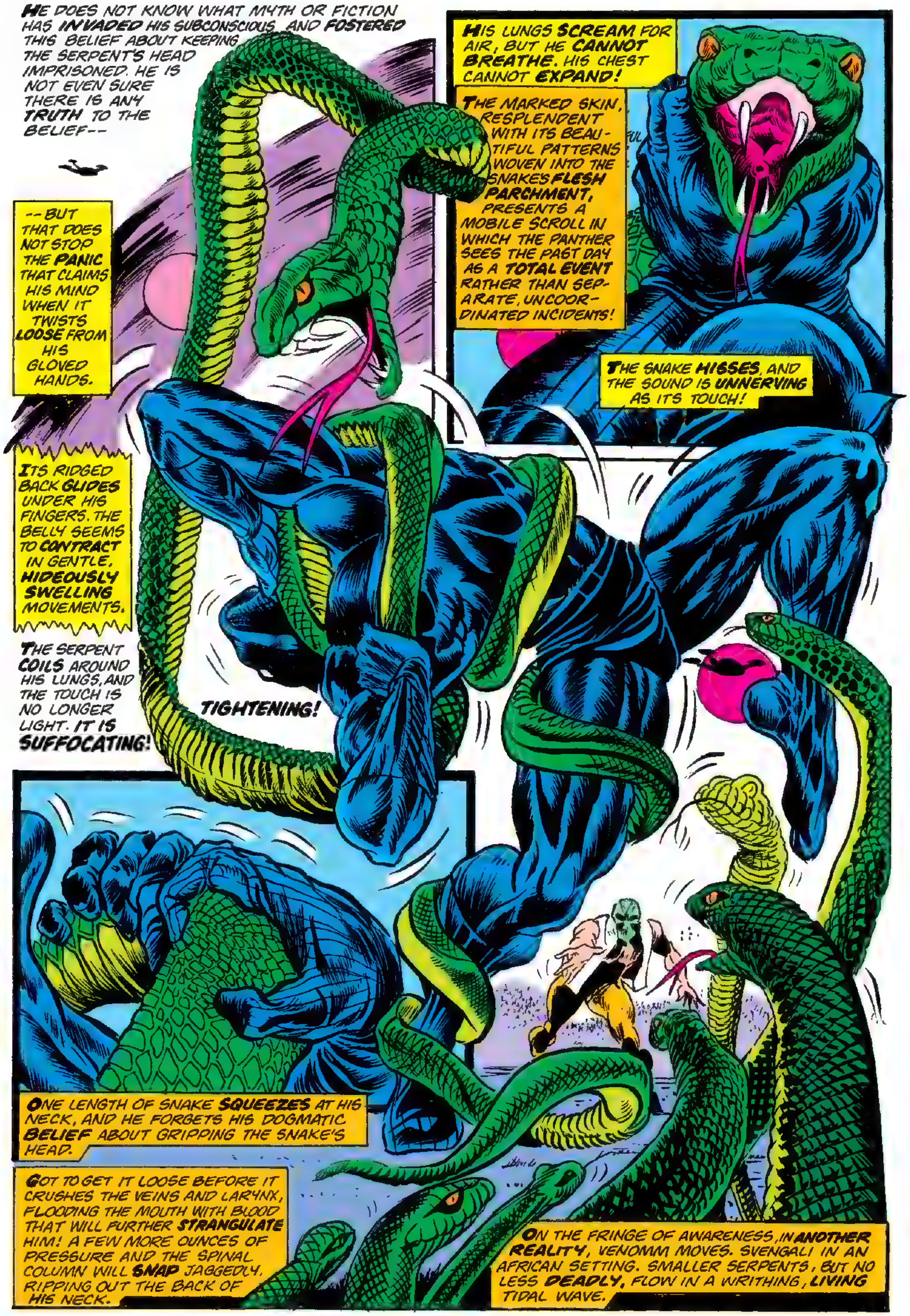

THE SHORELINE IS A BROODING LANDSCAPE, SPLIT WINE RACING UP THE CARPET OF SAND.
THE AIR IS ALIVE... BUZZING WITH THE FURIOUS HUM OF COUNTLESS MOSQUITOS. THE PANTHER HAS BEEN IN PLACES WHERE THE MOSQUITOS ARE SO THICK THAT TO BREATH IS TO SUCK THEM INTO YOUR NOSTRILS.
HE IS THE BLACK CAT, PAUSING FROM ITS STALKING STRIDE...AMBER EYES PERCEIVING A FIGURE UNRELATED TO HIS PURSUIT.
IT IS KANTU, AND AS HE LOOKS INTO THE SAD DEPTHS OF THOSE YOUNG EYES HE SEES REFLECTIONS OF HIMSELF, MOURNING FOR HIS FATHER, UNABLE TO ACCEPT HIS FATHER'S DEATH.
HE CAME TO THE RIVER THEN AND ASKED IT QUESTIONS... BUT DID NOT LISTEN FOR ANY ANSWERS.
KANTU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, SON?
MY CHIEFTAIN...
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO FORMAL.
BESIDES, I INTRUDED ON YOUR THOUGHTS. I ONCE TOLD A FRIEND THAT "A MAN GOES TO BROOD WHERE IT'S MOST ISOLATED, UNLESS HE HAS SOMEONE TO LISTEN TO HIS SILENCES."
I WOULD TELL YOU I UNDERSTAND YOUR GRIEF, BUT YOU COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT, COULD YOU, KANTU?
THIS MAN... THE ONE WHO IS CALLED KI--KILLMONGER... IT IS HIS FAULT MY FATHER IS DEAD. I COULD KILL HIM!
ONE THING YOU CAN BELIEVE ... YOUR MOTHER FEELS THE SAME LOSS.
I HAVE NEVER SEEN THIS MAN, MY CHIEFTAIN, BUT I HATE HIM.
THE PANTHER BOWS HIS HEAD, AND THE TWO OF THEM STARE INTO THE HARSH EYE OF THE SUN.
ONE ASKS IF THERE IS ANY HOPE LEFT AT ALL.
THE OTHER DOES NOT KNOW THE WORDS TO ASK SUCH A QUESTION, BUT WONDERS THE SAME THING.

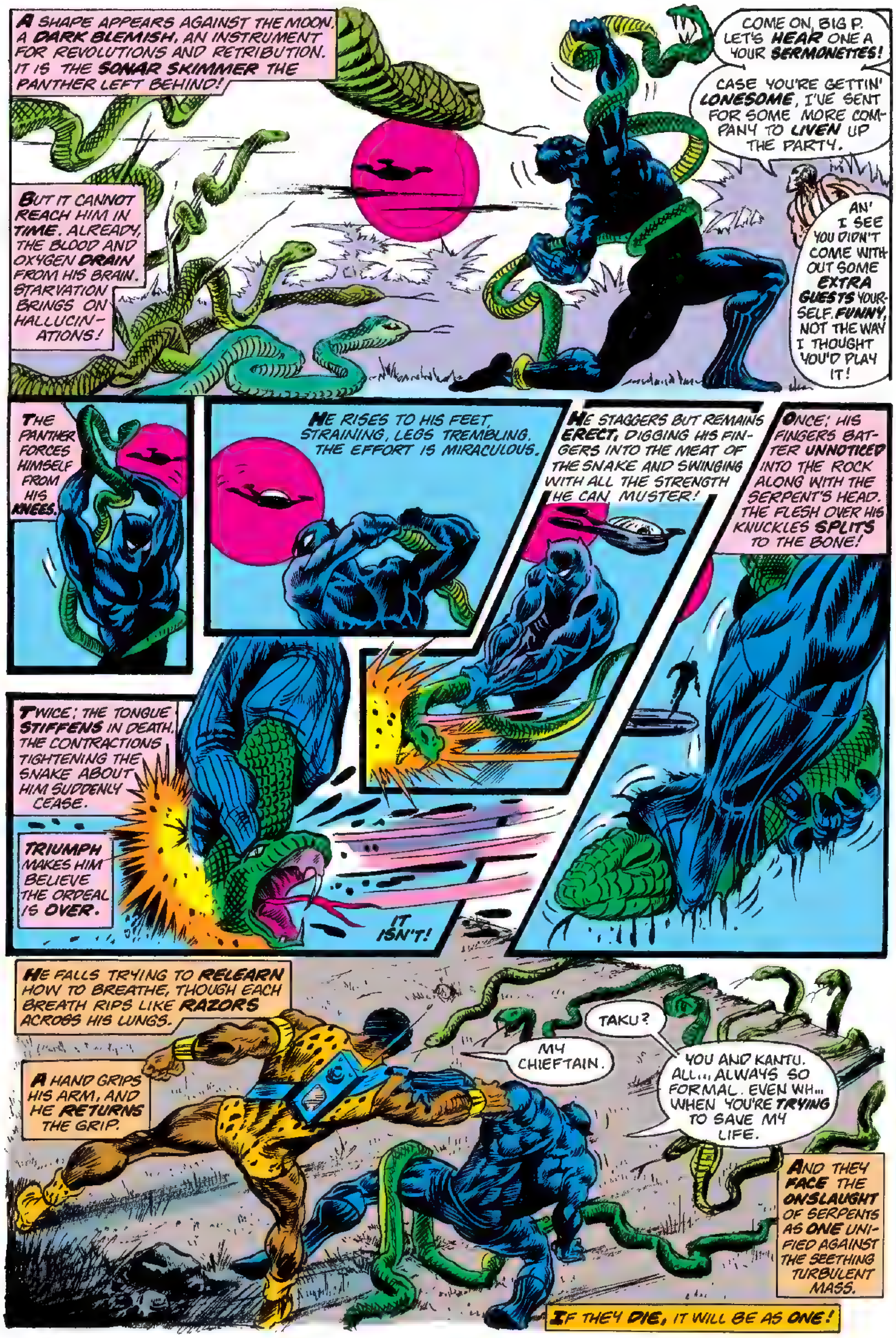


THE BLACK CAT DOES NOT ASK ANY QUESTIONS. IT NEEDS VERY FEW ANSWERS OR TRUTHS.
THE PANTHER PROWLS THE NIGHTSCAPE, AND HE IS THAT BLACK CAT, TREADING HIS DOMAIN. HE CEASES TO THINK OF KANTU AND W'KABI THE MOMENT HE CATCHES THE FIRST HINT OF CARBON TAINTING THE AIR.
HE BECOMES CAUTIOUS.
TESTING.
IDENTIFYING SHADOWS.
YES, VENOMM HAS BEEN HERE AND IS PROBABLY STILL NEARBY.
A BREATHING STILL-LIFE PORTRAIT--
--POISED--
--READY TO POUNCE!
THE SUN RETIRES TO ITS CHAMBERS--
--AND FAILS TO WITNESS THE DAY'S FINAL ACT.
AND THEN THE PATIENT CAT HAS SEPARATED HIS PREY FROM ALL THE OTHER SHAPES... AND MAKES HIS PRESENCE KNOWN!
VENOMM!
TOOK YOU LONG ENUFF TO GET HERE.
FIGGERED I BETTER COME OUT INTO THE OPEN OR YOU'D WAIT 'TILL HELL FROZE OVER.
CLEVER RIDDLES WON'T STAY MY HAND, VENOMM. I'VE LITTLE USE FOR MORE VIOLENCE ... BUT I AM NOT LETTING YOU WALK AWAY FROM HERE AFTER WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO W'KABI.

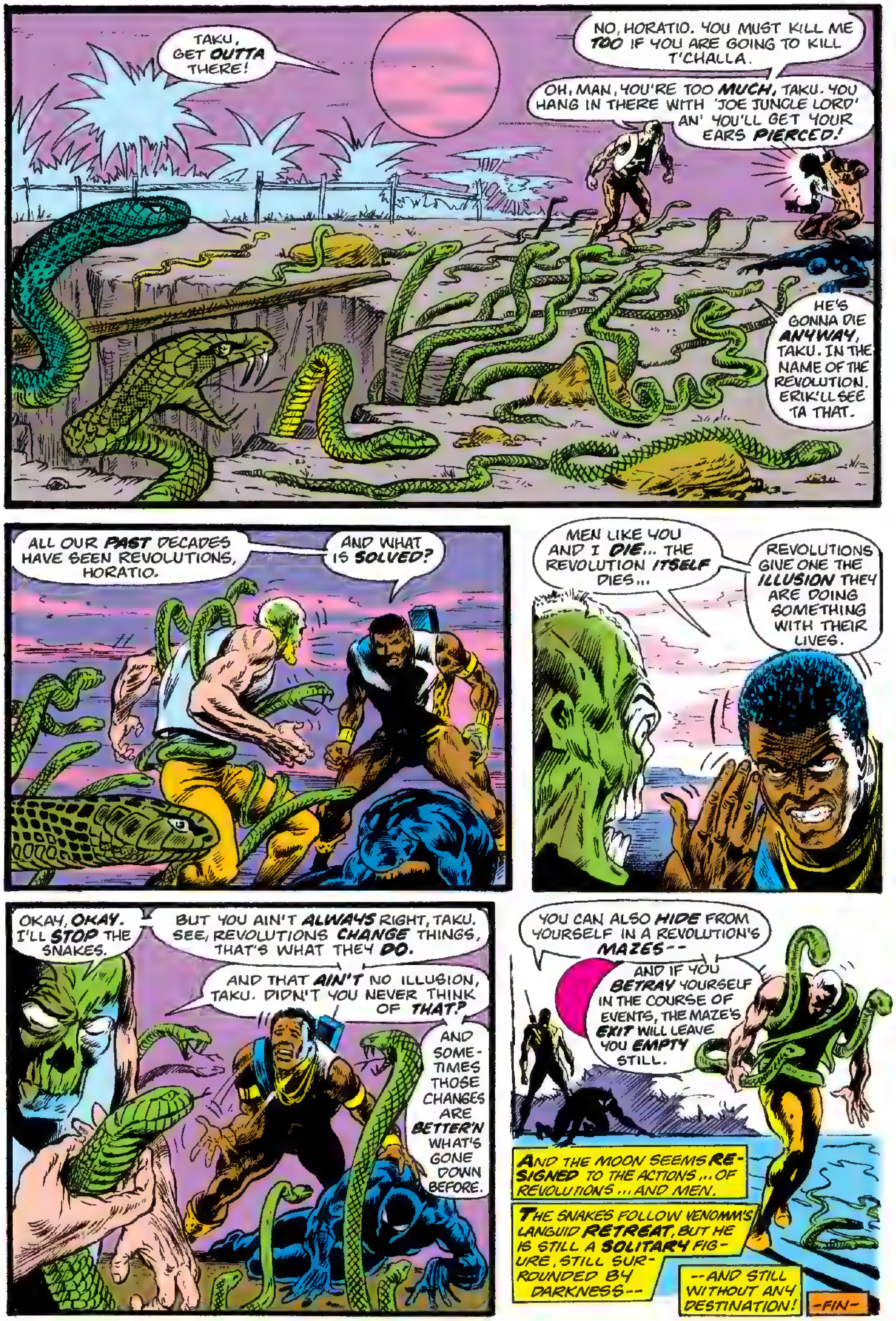


YOU AIN'T GOT ANY CHOICE 'BOUT WHERE I WALK... AND IT'S GONNA BE AWAY FROM HERE.
FACE IT, YOU AIN'T SO SLICK, BIG P.
I HAD IT FIGGERED YOU'D KNOW I'D COME BACK HERE TO REJOIN MY PETS. SO I WENT THROUGH THE BOTHER TO WHIP UP A RECEPTION--
--JUST FOR YOU!
THE PANTHER TURNS WITHOUT THOUGHT, AND THE SIGHT OF THE SWAYING, UNDULATING REPTILE IS PARALYZING!
TRANSLUCENT FANGS GLISTEN WITH LIQUID DEATH!
THE SERPENT DARTS IN AT HIM BEFORE HE CAN MOVE.
IS IT POSSIBLE? HAS THE SNAKE CALCULATED HIS RESPONSE TO IT'S FORM?
THAT'S IT, BIG P. YOU DO YOUR THING RIGHT TO THE END!
AT FIRST IT IS A LIGHT CARESS, TOUCHING FAINTLY AT THE LEG. HE TRIES TO DRAW HIS LEG BACK, BUT THE MOVEMENT IS TOO SLOW!
HAS IT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THAT MANY HUMANS INSTINCTIVELY FEAR REPTILES? HAS IT COUNTED ON THAT FACTOR IN ITS STRATEGY OF ATTACK?
IMPOSSIBLE, HE TELLS HIMSELF. SNAKES DO NOT PLAN DEATH STRATEGIES. THAT IS A HUMAN FACULTY TO AID THEM IN THEIR PREOCCUPATION WITH REVOLUTIONS!
THE CARESS WHISPERS ABOUT HIS HIPS, TIGHTENING, SLITHERING UPWARD!
THE NECK! KEEP HOLD OF ITS NECK! DON'T LET THAT HEAD GET AT YOU.
AS IF TO CONTRADICT THAT THOUGHT, THE OPHIDIAN SHAPE WRAPS ITSELF PURPOSEFULLY ABOUT HIM!


HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT MYTH OR FICTION HAS INVADED HIS SUBCONSCIOUS, AND FOSTERED THIS BELIEF ABOUT KEEPING THE SERPENT'S HEAD IMPRISONED. HE IS NOT EVEN SURE THERE IS ANY TRUTH TO THE BELIEF--
--BUT THAT DOES NOT STOP THE PANIC THAT CLAIMS HIS MIND WHEN IT TWISTS LOOSE FROM HIS GLOVED HANDS.
HIS LUNGS SCREAM FOR AIR, BUT HE CANNOT BREATHE. HIS CHEST CANNOT EXPAND!
THE MARKED SKIN, RESPLENDENT WITH ITS BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS WOVEN INTO THE SNAKE'S FLESH PARCHMENT, PRESENTS A MOBILE SCROLL IN WHICH THE PANTHER SEES THE PAST DAY AS A TOTAL EVENT RATHER THAN SEPARATE, UNCOORDINATED INCIDENTS!
THE SNAKE HISSES, AND THE SOUND IS UNNERVING AS ITS TOUCH!
ITS RIDGED BACK GLIDES UNDER HIS FINGERS. THE BELLY SEEMS TO CONTRACT IN GENTLE, HIDEOUSLY SWELLING MOVEMENTS.
THE SERPENT COILS AROUND HIS LUNGS, AND THE TOUCH IS NO LONGER LIGHT. IT IS SUFFOCATING!
TIGHTENING!
ONE LENGTH OF SNAKE SQUEEZES AT HIS NECK, AND HE FORGETS HIS DOGMATIC BELIEF ABOUT GRIPPING THE SNAKE'S HEAD.
GOT TO GET IT LOOSE BEFORE IT CRUSHES THE VEINS AND LARYNX, FLOODING THE MOUTH WITH BLOOD THAT WILL FURTHER STRANGULATE HIM! A FEW MORE OUNCES OF PRESSURE AND THE SPINAL COLUMN WILL SNAP JAGGEDLY, RIPPING OUT THE BACK OF HIS NECK.
ON THE FRINGE OF AWARENESS, IN ANOTHER REALITY, VENOMM MOVES. SVENGALI IN AN AFRICAN SETTING. SMALLER SERPENTS, BUT NO LESS DEADLY, FLOW IN A WRITHING, LIVING TIDAL WAVE.



A SHAPE APPEARS AGAINST THE MOON, A DARK BLEMISH, AN INSTRUMENT FOR REVOLUTIONS AND RETRIBUTION. IT IS THE SONAR SKIMMER THE PANTHER LEFT BEHIND!
COME ON, BIG P. LET'S HEAR ONE A YOUR SERMONETTES!
CASE YOU'RE GETTIN' LONESOME, I'VE SENT FOR SOME MORE COMPANY TO LIVEN UP THE PARTY.
BUT IT CANNOT REACH HIM IN TIME. ALREADY, THE BLOOD AND OXYGEN DRAIN FROM HIS BRAIN. STARVATION BRINGS ON HALLUCINATIONS!
AN' I SEE YOU DIDN'T COME WITHOUT SOME EXTRA GUESTS YOURSELF. FUNNY, NOT THE WAY I THOUGHT YOU'D PLAY IT!
THE PANTHER FORCES HIMSELF FROM HIS KNEES.
HE RISES TO HIS FEET, STRAINING, LEGS TREMBLING. THE EFFORT IS MIRACULOUS.
HE STAGGERS BUT REMAINS ERECT, DIGGING HIS FINGERS INTO THE MEAT OF THE SNAKE AND SWINGING WITH ALL THE STRENGTH HE CAN MUSTER!
ONCE: HIS FINGERS BATTER UNNOTICED INTO THE ROCK ALONG WITH THE SERPENT'S HEAD. THE FLESH OVER HIS KNUCKLES SPLITS TO THE BONE!
TWICE: THE TONGUE STIFFENS IN DEATH. THE CONTRACTIONS TIGHTENING THE SNAKE ABOUT HIM SUDDENLY CEASE.
TRIUMPH MAKES HIM BELIEVE THE ORDEAL IS OVER.
IT ISN'T!
HE FALLS TRYING TO RELEARN HOW TO BREATHE, THOUGH EACH BREATH RIPS LIKE RAZORS ACROSS HIS LUNGS.
A HAND GRIPS HIS ARM, AND HE RETURNS THE GRIP.
MY CHIEFTAIN.
TAKU?
YOU AND KANTU. ALL... ALWAYS SO FORMAL. EVEN WH... WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE MY LIFE.
AND THEY FACE THE ONSLAUGHT OF SERPENTS AS ONE UNIFIED AGAINST THE SEETHING TURBULENT MASS.
IF THEY DIE, IT WILL BE AS ONE!


TAKU, GET OUTTA THERE!
NO, HORATIO. YOU MUST KILL ME TOO IF YOU ARE GOING TO KILL T'CHALLA.
OH, MAN, YOU'RE TOO MUCH, TAKU. YOU HANG IN THERE WITH 'JOE JUNGLE LORD' AN' YOU'LL GET YOUR EARS PIERCED!
HE'S GONNA DIE ANYWAY, TAKU. IN THE NAME OF THE REVOLUTION, ERIK'LL SEE TA THAT.
ALL OUR PAST DECADES HAVE SEEN REVOLUTIONS, HORATIO.
AND WHAT IS SOLVED?
MEN LIKE YOU AND I DIE... THE REVOLUTION ITSELF DIES...
REVOLUTIONS GIVE ONE THE ILLUSION THEY ARE DOING SOMETHING WITH THEIR LIVES.
OKAY, OKAY. I'LL STOP THE SNAKES.
BUT YOU AIN'T ALWAYS RIGHT, TAKU. SEE, REVOLUTIONS CHANGE THINGS. THAT'S WHAT THEY DO.
AND THAT AIN'T NO ILLUSION, TAKU. DIDN'T YOU NEVER THINK OF THAT?
AND SOMETIMES THOSE CHANGES ARE BETTER'N WHAT'S GONE DOWN BEFORE.
YOU CAN ALSO HIDE FROM YOURSELF IN A REVOLUTION'S MAZES--
AND IF YOU BETRAY YOURSELF IN THE COURSE OF EVENTS, THE MAZE'S EXIT WILL LEAVE YOU EMPTY STILL.
AND THE MOON SEEMS RESIGNED TO THE ACTIONS... OF REVOLUTIONS... AND MEN.
THE SNAKES FOLLOW VENOMM'S LANGUID RETREAT, BUT HE IS STILL A SOLITARY FIGURE, STILL SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS--
--AND STILL WITHOUT ANY DESTINATION!
-FIN-

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

A JUNGLE REACTION-LESS

That was last ish, Pantherites, when we suddenly found ourselves with a 19-page chapter of "Panther's Rage!" rather than our new limit of 18. Your jungle drums played their messages into the United States Postal system, and those messages (with tiny little heads sticking out of their envelopes) got into line and marched from near and far just to get to 575 Madison Ave. And you thought the Wakandan communications team was a bit strange. Phew!

Dear People:

Your latest Black Panther tale, "The God Killer," could only be digested on a series of different levels. Speaking personally for a moment, I'd have to say it was easily one of the most conceptually complex tales ever published by Marvel. . . or, come to think of it, any other comics group. Despite the endless pages of critique one could write on this thematic masterpiece of religious ideals, it's only right, I figure, to go into some depth of criticism as to how it was presented.

Don proves that these pencil-and-ink creations are true literary characters, as real as Shakespeare's Hamlet, or Orwell's Winston Smith (and if you've any experience in literature, which I'm sure you have, you can attest that for the duration of the story, a good writer's characters are real).

Really beautiful; the sheer, graphic *horror* embodied in Billy Graham's awesome portrayal of the legendary white gorillas—they looked like an Edgar Rice Burroughs fever dream—and lastly (in this run-down), a comprehensive knowledge of where the story is headed, as this pictorial novel winds up yellow brick roads to emerald cities undreamed of—emerald, and ruby, and diamond, and gold. Onward. The theological observations were, of course, devastating. If thought about in the correct vein, they apply directly to any religion. Imagine: Did all religious cultures begin that way? Imagine: Of all the religions that have flourished since the beginning of human civilization, who is right in their belief? Don't *all* religions think theirs is the true way? Imagine: In the beginning, did Man create God (c.f.: Jethro Tull, "Aqualung")? Imagine the extreme *loneliness* each man would feel if, suddenly and irrevocably, he would somehow learn that, perhaps, their *is* no Supreme Being, and that we're all alone, no one and nothing to listen to our wishful prayers.

Imagine there's no heaven: it's easy if you try. . . .

The Black Panther slew a god; not his god, but the Supreme Deity of someone else's beliefs. But what if it had been the god of T'Challa's faith? In this latest chapter, Don McGregor asks: When a man slays his god, what does that make him? Is that a question without an answer, I wonder. Or is it one with many answers, each dependent on the answerer's reflecting deep on his own soul?

The god killer . . . I suppose he can be described as many things, but that would only serve to tell of his outer self against circumstance. He could be described as a number of things—lonely, without magic, disillusioned, probably bitter. Would he still be a man, I wonder?

Would he still be a man?

I'm sorry. I should realize that those are impossible questions to understand, much less answer. And I don't think I'll ever stop wondering. At least until I'm dead.

Frank S. Lovece
947 Maple Drive, Box 15
Morgantown, W. Va. 26505

And let's hope that's a long, looonng time from today, Frank.

Many of your comments penetrated the interior layers of "The God Killer," and we're sorry we had to cut much of your letter. There is one point Don would like to clarify. Each man has the capacity (or ability if you prefer) to become the God killer, and it is this inherent point that is the central theme of our story. To make it brief, and probably forever ruin the complexity of the subject, the members of any religion can reach a theological crisis wherein they question the beliefs that they have learned since their infancy. Will those beliefs continue to sustain them? If they don't, they have, in effect, become that disillusioned person without magic that you mention. If the belief remains, it normally becomes a more intense belief, with a stronger foundation. The person who, in effect, becomes the God Killer faces a more disturbing crisis if he has nothing to replace that discarded belief.

Sheesh, can you believe this kind of discussion in a comic book?

Dear Editor,

I think issue number 13 was good with the white gorillas.

The first Black Panther comic I got was when the Black Panther got attacked by the crocodile.

My daddy like them, too. I am six years old. And for a six year old kid my daddy think it's funny to like the Black Panther at my age.

He thinks it's too confusing to read.

ADAM
(no address given)

At first, we thought you were putting us on, Adam, and that Steve Gerber had slipped a letter in the Jungle Reactions stack of mail. But Steve pleads that he's not that crazy (we won't even make the obvious pun), and so we're left reading and rereading your letter. Next time, send us your address, Adam.

Oh, and if you're wondering why we're re-reading your letter, Adam, it's just that Don says it's too confusing and he doesn't understand a word of it.

But don't worry, all of us here, including Don, still think your letter was good.

NEXT ISSUE: Two years in the making! Wakanda's epic conflict explodes into its final, stunning chapter. The Panther and Killmonger are locked in the most brutal battle (wouldn't you love it if we said of this or any other decade?) with an outcome that won't be anything like you expect. And Killmonger won't be alone for that fateful raid on the Palace Royal. King Cadaver, Malice, Tayete and Kazibe, Venomm, they'll all be there. Better pick out the best tree limb in your jungle habitat, Pantherite, while you wait just two months for the catalysmic end to "Panther's Rage!" And ask yourself, "How in the devil are they going to squeeze all that into one story?"

Be here...and find out!

Until then, hang in there!

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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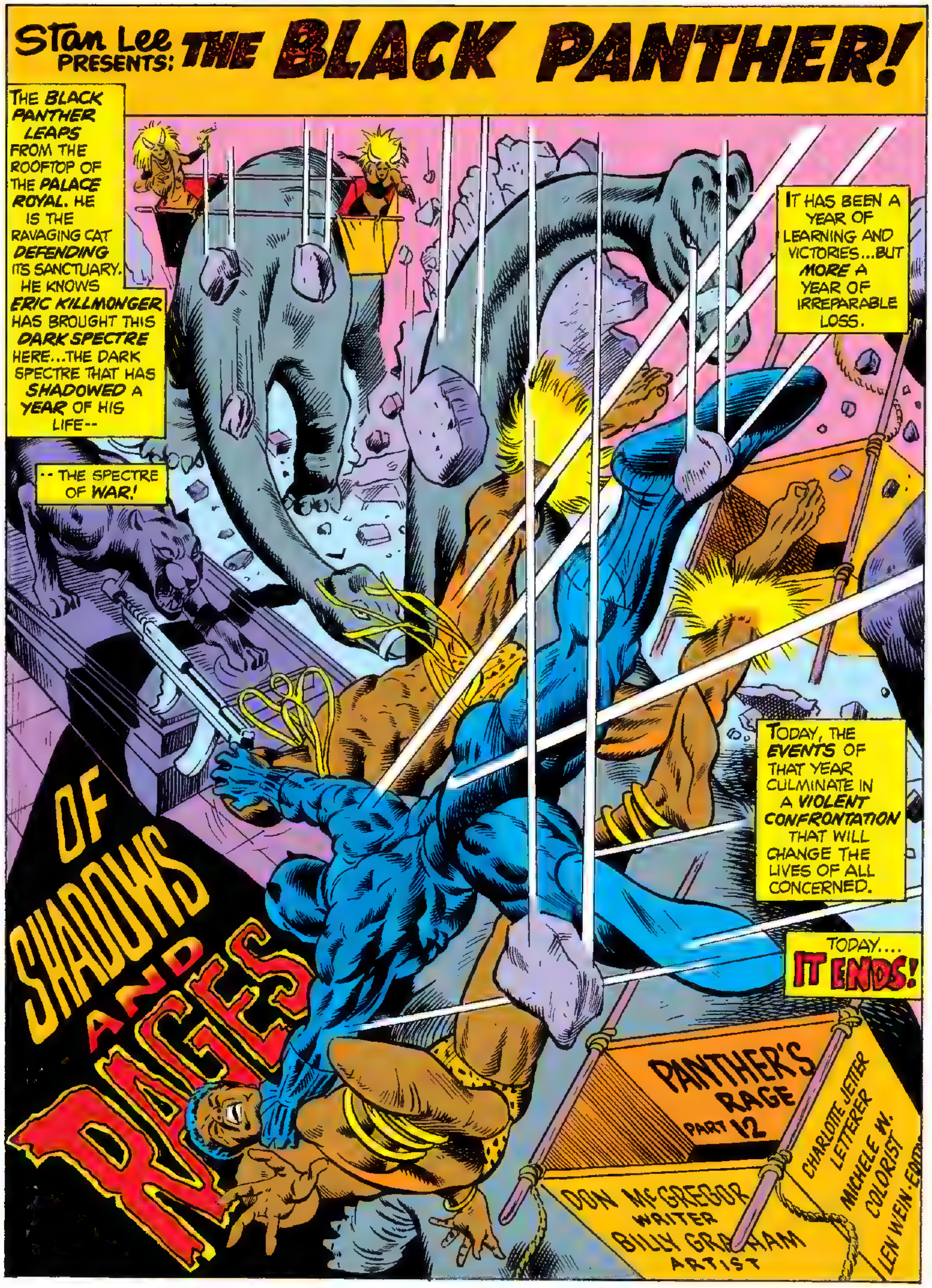
JUNGLE ACTION
FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
THIS IS IT!!
THE SENSES SHATTERING CLIMAX OF
PANTHER'S RAGE!
AND ONE SHALL DIE!
THE END OF AN EPIC--AND PERHAPS, THE END OF THE
BLACK PANTHER!


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!
THE BLACK PANTHER LEAPS FROM THE ROOFTOP OF THE PALACE ROYAL. HE IS THE RAVAGING CAT DEFENDING ITS SANCTUARY. HE KNOWS ERIC KILLMONGER HAS BROUGHT THIS DARK SPECTRE HERE...THE DARK SPECTRE THAT HAS SHADOWED A YEAR OF HIS LIFE--
-- THE SPECTRE OF WAR!
IT HAS BEEN A YEAR OF LEARNING AND VICTORIES...BUT MORE A YEAR OF IRREPARABLE LOSS.
OF SHADOWS AND RAGES
TODAY, THE EVENTS OF THAT YEAR CULMINATE IN A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION THAT WILL CHANGE THE LIVES OF ALL CONCERNED.
TODAY.... IT ENDS!
PANTHER'S RAGE PART 12
DON McGREGOR WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST
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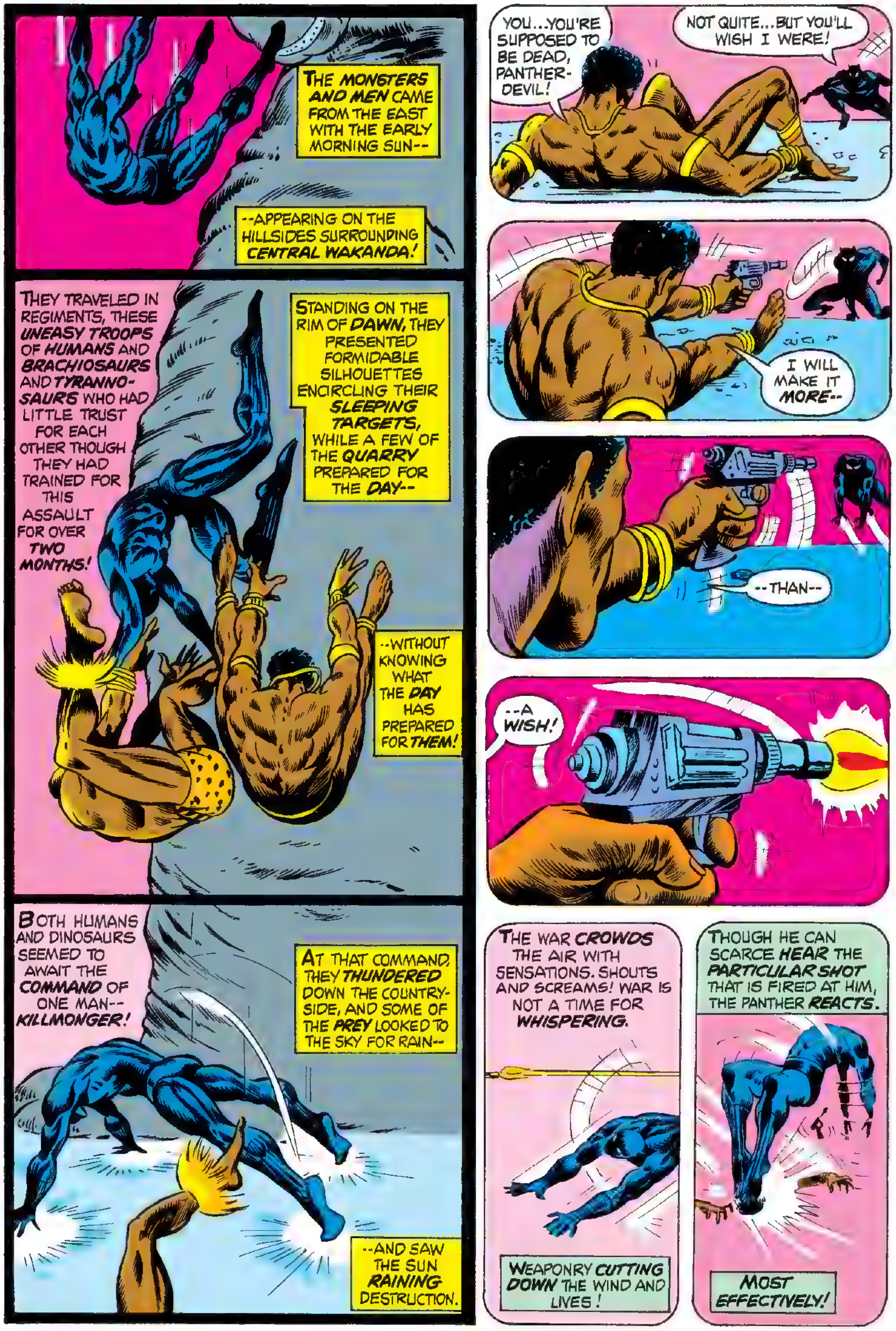
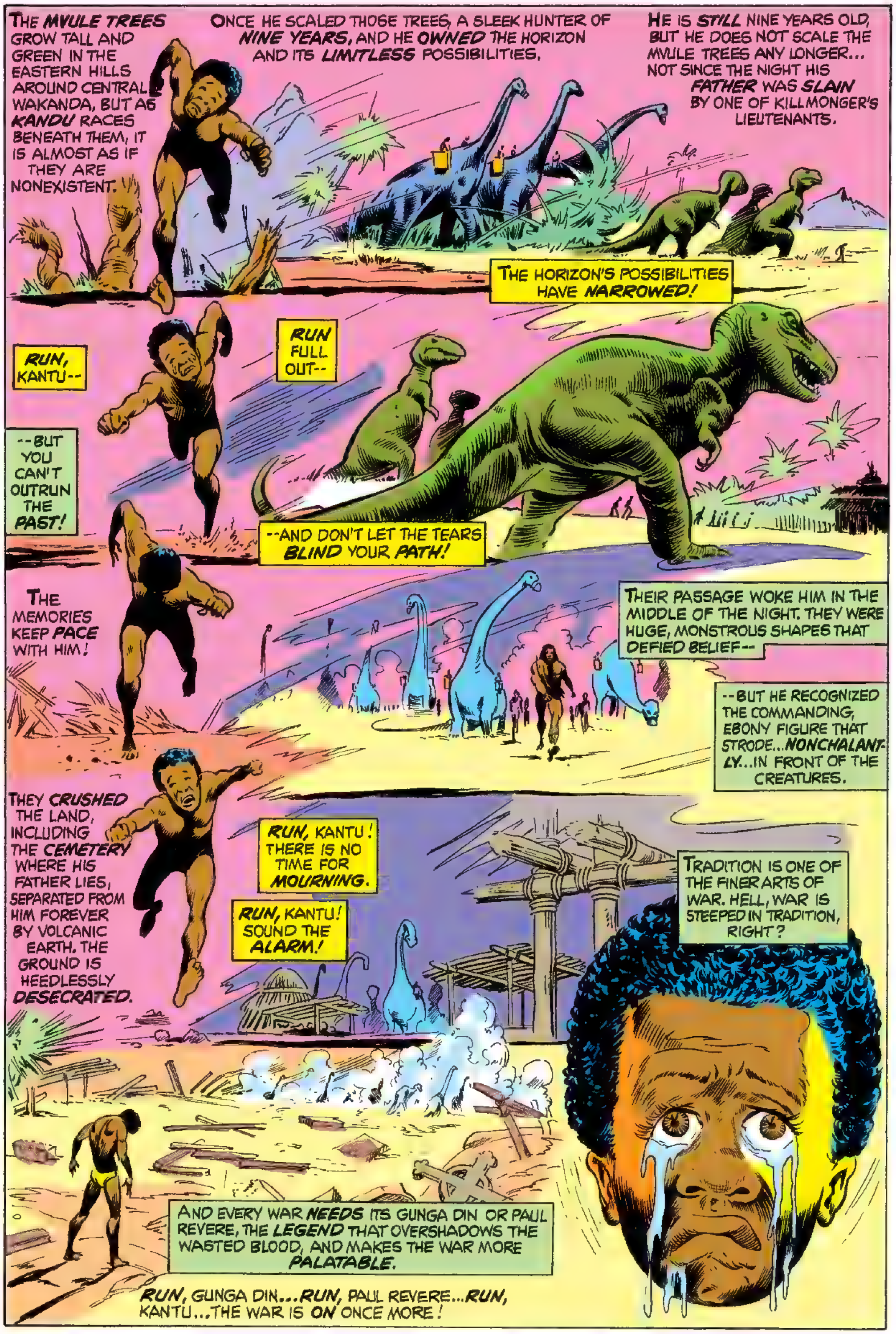
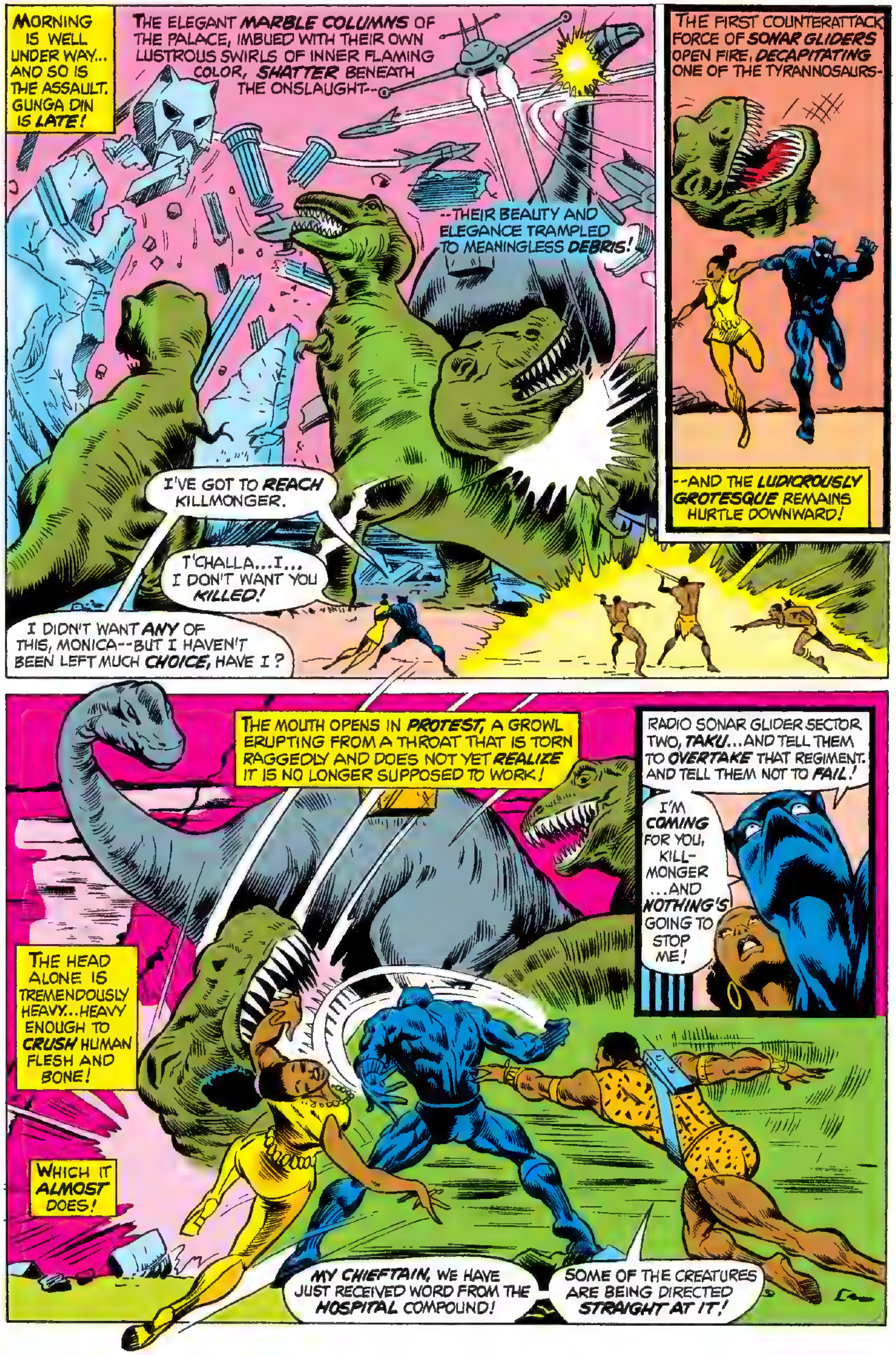
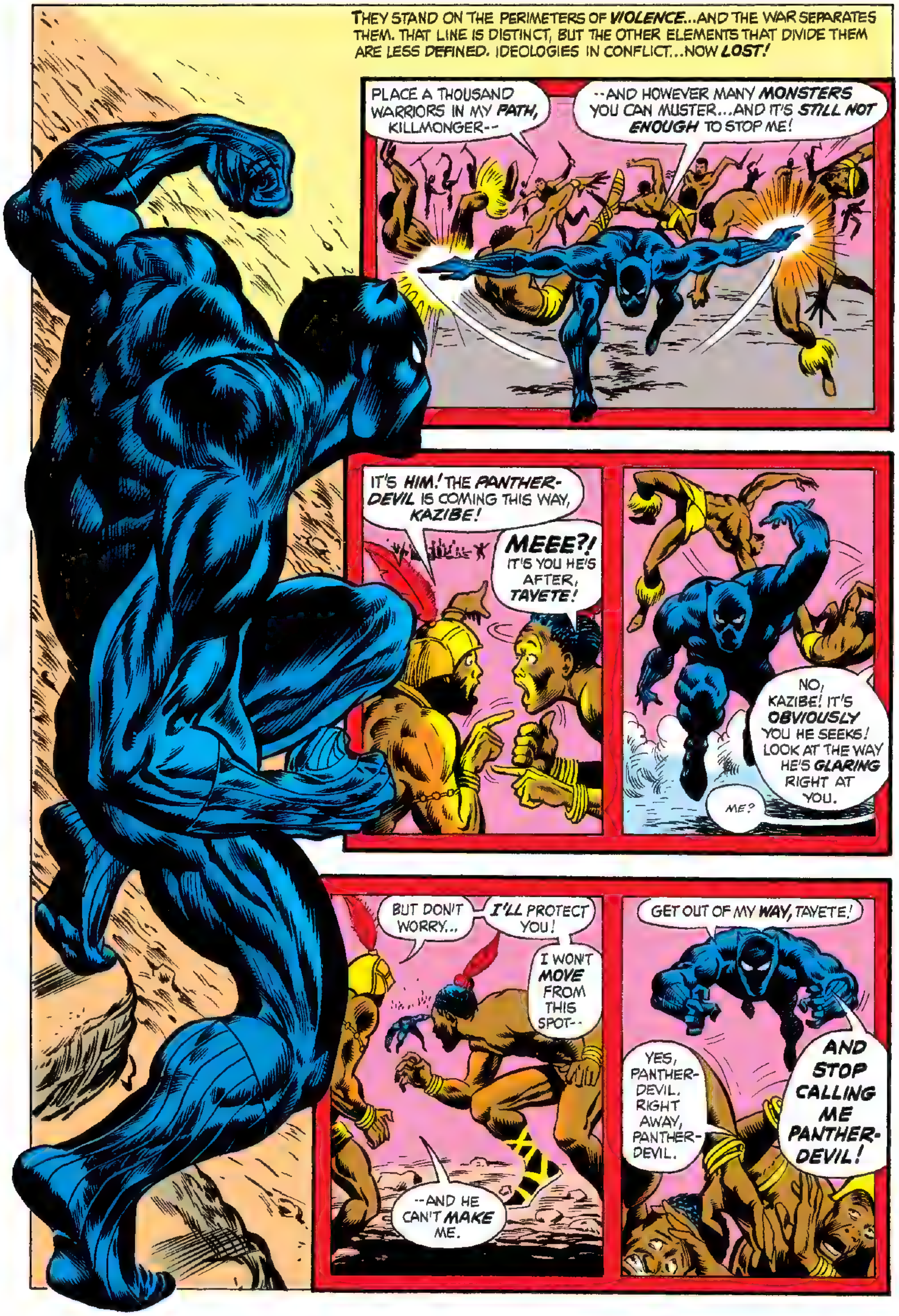
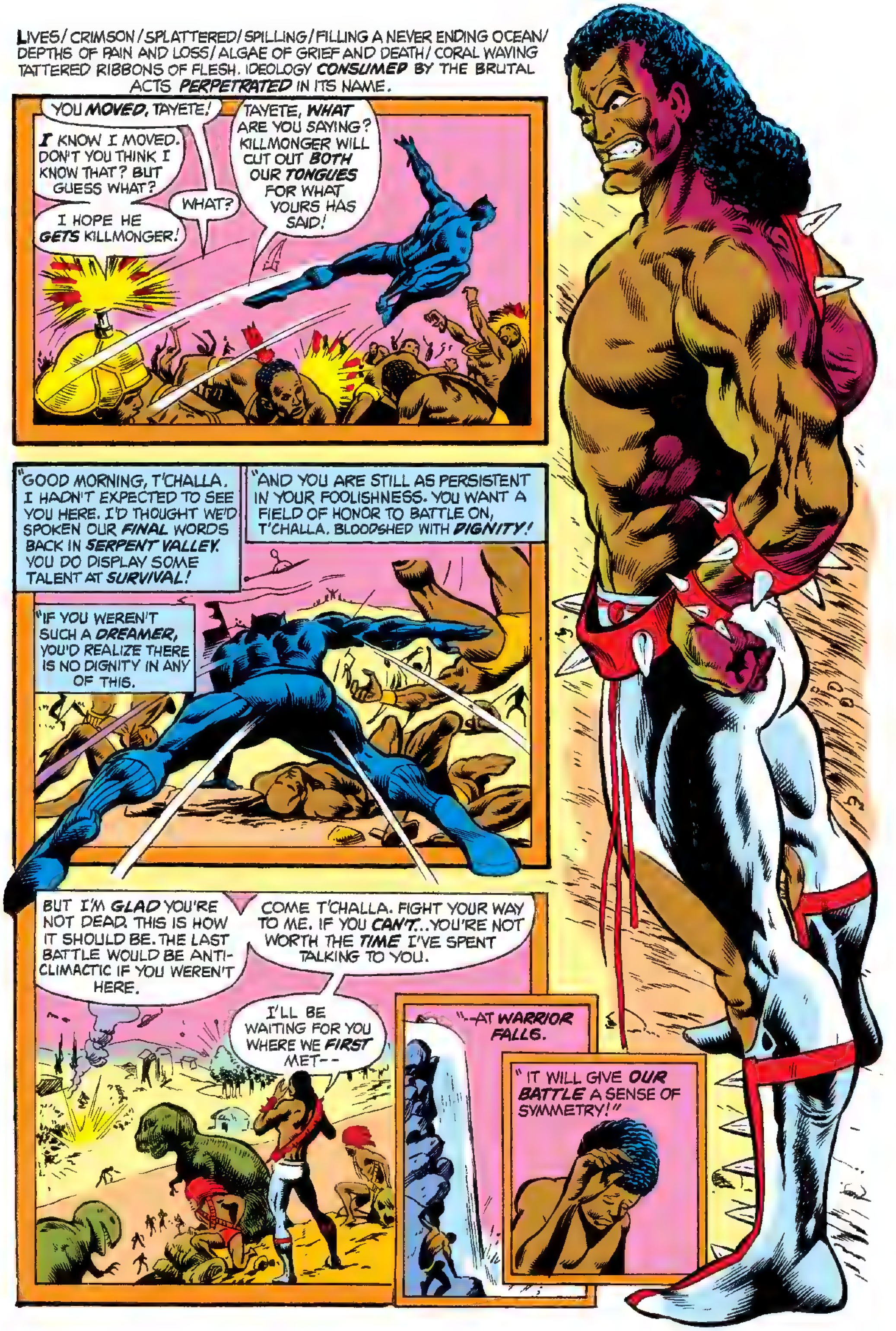

THE MONSTERS AND MEN CAME FROM THE EAST WITH THE EARLY MORNING SUN--
--APPEARING ON THE HILLSIDES SURROUNDING CENTRAL WAKANDA!
THEY TRAVELED IN REGIMENTS, THESE UNEASY TROOPS OF HUMANS AND BRACHIOSAURS AND TYRANNO-SAURS WHO HAD LITTLE TRUST FOR EACH OTHER THOUGH THEY HAD TRAINED FOR THIS ASSAULT FOR OVER TWO MONTHS!
STANDING ON THE RIM OF DAWN, THEY PRESENTED FORMIDABLE SILHOUETTES ENCIRCLING THEIR SLEEPING TARGETS, WHILE A FEW OF THE QUARRY PREPARED FOR THE DAY--
--WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT THE DAY HAS PREPARED FOR THEM!
BOTH HUMANS AND DINOSAURS SEEMED TO AWAIT THE COMMAND OF ONE MAN-- KILLMONGER!
AT THAT COMMAND, THEY THUNDERED DOWN THE COUNTRY-SIDE, AND SOME OF THE PREY LOOKED TO THE SKY FOR RAIN--
--AND SAW THE SUN RAINING DESTRUCTION.
YOU...YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD, PANTHER-DEVIL!
NOT QUITE...BUT YOU'LL WISH I WERE!
I WILL MAKE IT MORE--
--THAN--
--A WISH!
THE WAR CROWDS THE AIR WITH SENSATIONS. SHOUTS AND SCREAMS! WAR IS NOT A TIME FOR WHISPERING.
WEAPONRY CUTTING DOWN THE WIND AND LIVES!
THOUGH HE CAN SCARCE HEAR THE PARTICULAR SHOT THAT IS FIRED AT HIM, THE PANTHER REACTS.
MOST EFFECTIVELY!

THE PANTHER TURNS WITH ANIMAL CAUTION, SURVEYING THE CLASH BETWEEN HIS SECURITY FORCES AND KILLMONGER'S WARRIORS.
HIS AMBER EYES REGISTER A SILENT SNARL: "DON'T...PLEASE DON'T DESTROY IT ALL!" AND THEY ALSO SEE MONICA LYNNE, AND THE THREAT BECOMES MORE THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF A DREAM TO WHICH HE WAS ONCE PRISONER!
LASERS SCORCH THE AIR AND SCAR THE GROUND! THE LIGHT HAS BEEN HARNESSED JUST AS THE DINOSAURS HAVE BEEN BY THE ELECTRICAL BITS THAT CLAMP INTO THEIR MOUTHS AND KEEP THEM FROM STAMPEDING--
--AND NOW THE LIGHT OFFERS THE DARKNESS OF DEATH!
THE PANTHER LEAPS--
--SUPERBLY--
--USING THE SIDE OF THE BEHEMOTH AS A CATAPULT--
--AND VAULTING OVER ITS HUGE, BROAD BACK--
--HE DROPS NIMBLY ON THE OTHER SIDE IN LESS THAN FIFTEEN SECONDS!
YOU DO THAT WELL, T'CHALLA, BUT BELIEVE ME, I WASN'T GOING TO FAINT OR FREEZE--
I WAS WELL ON MY WAY TO GETTING MYSELF OUT OF THERE... BUT FAST!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
AM I ALL RIGHT? YOU'RE THE ONE THAT DOVE OFF A ROOFTOP, GOT YOURSELF SHOT AT AND JUST SCALED THAT REJECT FROM KING KONG...AND YOU ASK ME IF I'M ALL RIGHT?
IT'S FRIGHTENING, ISN'T IT?
VERY! WHEN IT STARTED, I THOUGHT THOSE RAGGED PROPHETS WHO PREDICT THE END OF THE WORLD WERE HAVING THEIR DAY!
"THEY'RE NOT...BUT KILLMONGER IS HAVING HIS!", T'CHALLA STATES...AND HIS EYES EXPRESS MORE THAN HIS WORDS!

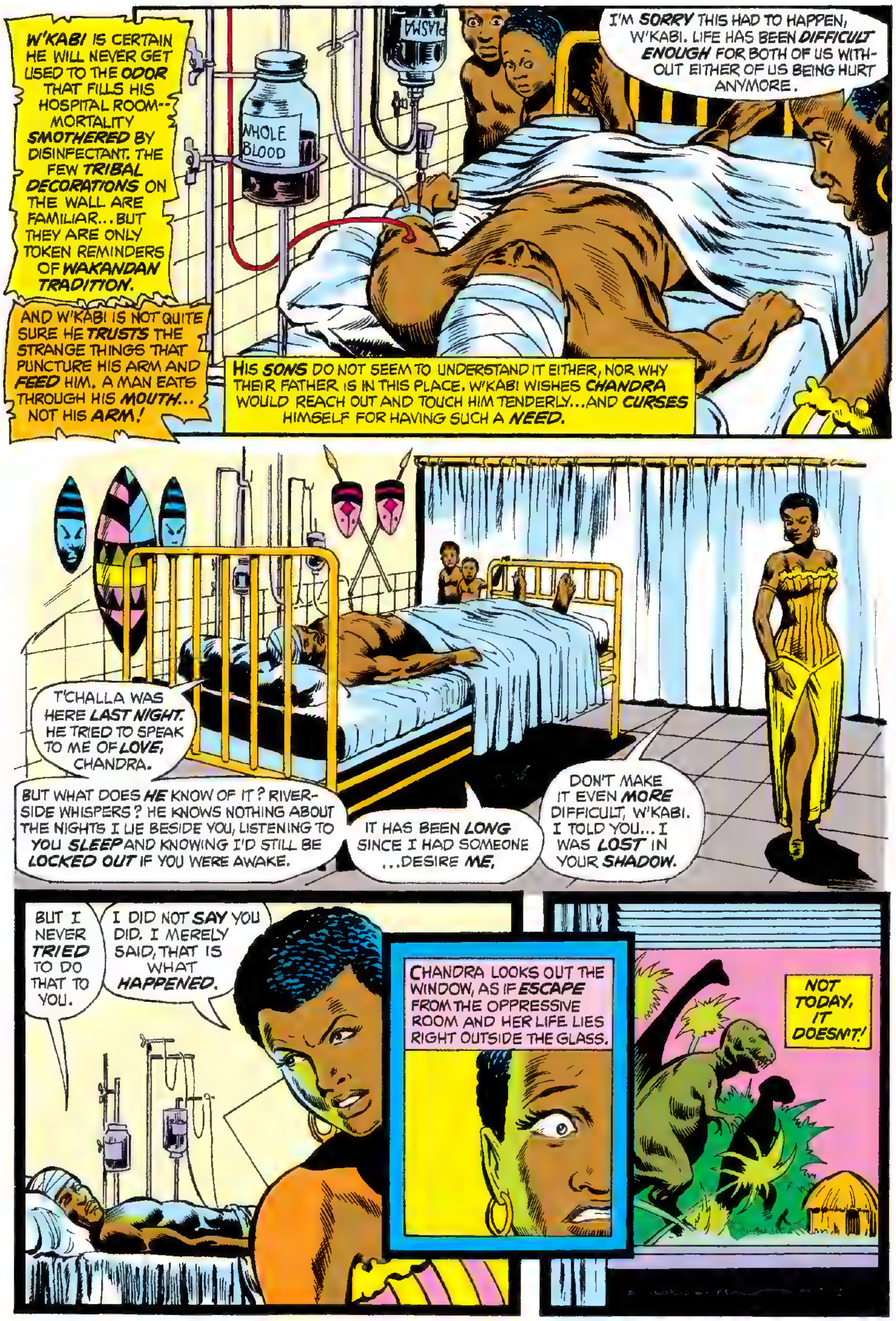

THE MVULE TREES GROW TALL AND GREEN IN THE EASTERN HILLS AROUND CENTRAL WAKANDA, BUT AS KANDU RACES BENEATH THEM, IT IS ALMOST AS IF THEY ARE NONEXISTENT.
ONCE HE SCALED THOSE TREES, A SLEEK HUNTER OF NINE YEARS, AND HE OWNED THE HORIZON AND ITS LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES.
HE IS STILL NINE YEARS OLD, BUT HE DOES NOT SCALE THE MVULE TREES ANY LONGER... NOT SINCE THE NIGHT HIS FATHER WAS SLAIN BY ONE OF KILLMONGER'S LIEUTENANTS.
THE HORIZON'S POSSIBILITIES HAVE NARROWED!
RUN, KANTU--
RUN FULL OUT--
--BUT YOU CAN'T OUTRUN THE PAST!
--AND DON'T LET THE TEARS BLIND YOUR PATH!
THE MEMORIES KEEP PACE WITH HIM!
THEIR PASSAGE WOKE HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. THEY WERE HUGE, MONSTROUS SHAPES THAT DEFIED BELIEF--
--BUT HE RECOGNIZED THE COMMANDING, EBONY FIGURE THAT STRODE...NONCHALANTLY...IN FRONT OF THE CREATURES.
THEY CRUSHED THE LAND, INCLUDING THE CEMETERY WHERE HIS FATHER LIES, SEPARATED FROM HIM FOREVER BY VOLCANIC EARTH. THE GROUND IS HEEDLESSLY DESECRATED.
RUN, KANTU! THERE IS NO TIME FOR MOURNING.
RUN, KANTU! SOUND THE ALARM!
TRADITION IS ONE OF THE FINER ARTS OF WAR. HELL, WAR IS STEEPED IN TRADITION, RIGHT?
AND EVERY WAR NEEDS ITS GUNGA DIN OR PAUL REVERE, THE LEGEND THAT OVERSHADOWS THE WASTED BLOOD, AND MAKES THE WAR MORE PALATABLE.
RUN, GUNGA DIN...RUN, PAUL REVERE...RUN, KANTU...THE WAR IS ON ONCE MORE!

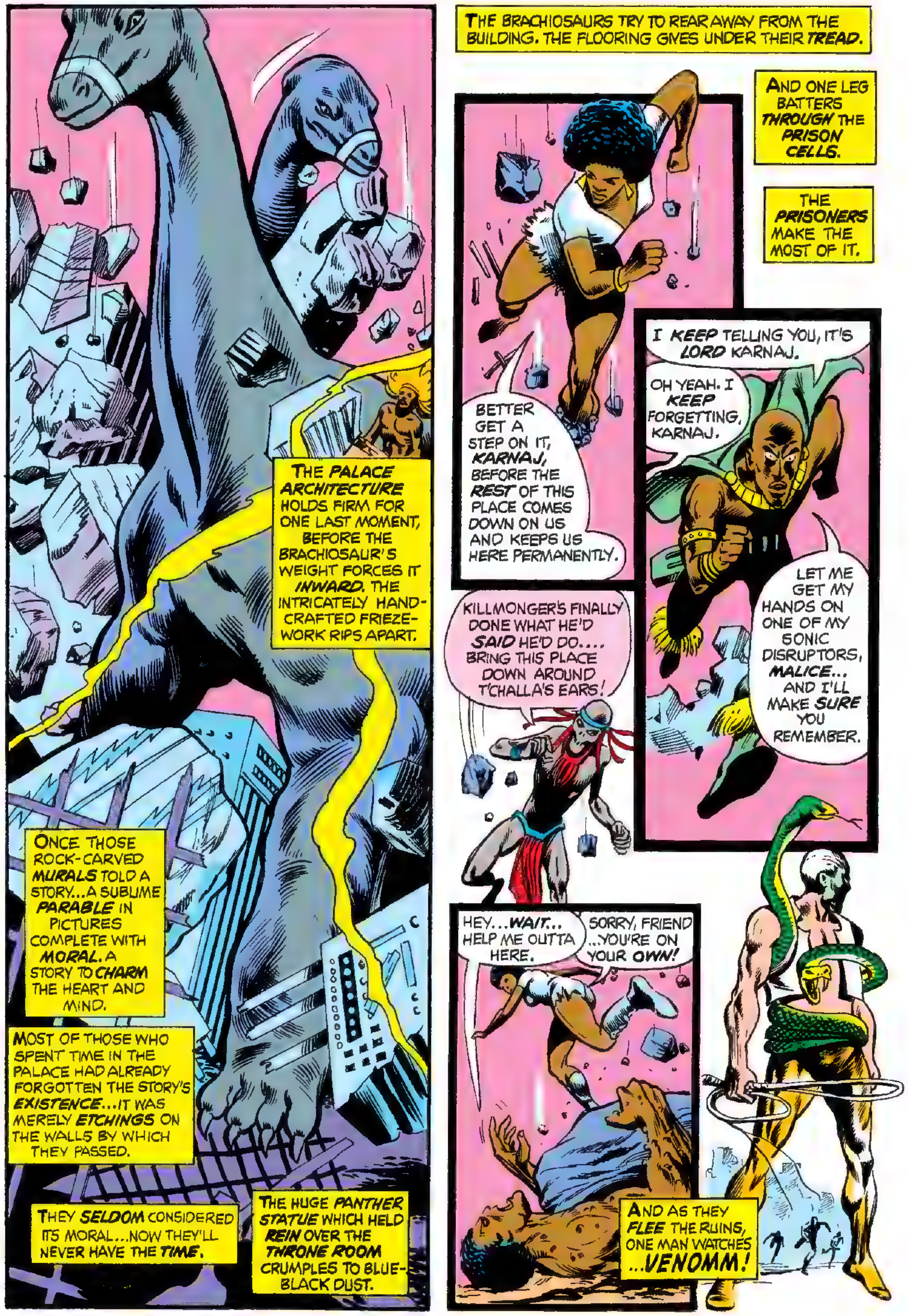

MORNING IS WELL UNDER WAY... AND SO IS THE ASSAULT. GUNGA DIN IS LATE!
THE ELEGANT MARBLE COLUMNS OF THE PALACE, IMBUED WITH THEIR OWN LUSTROUS SWIRLS OF INNER FLAMING COLOR, SHATTER BENEATH THE ONSLAUGHT--
--THEIR BEAUTY AND ELEGANCE TRAMPLED TO MEANINGLESS DEBRIS!
THE FIRST COUNTERATTACK FORCE OF SONAR GLIDERS OPEN FIRE, DECAPITATING ONE OF THE TYRANNOSAURS-
--AND THE LUDICROUSLY GROTESQUE REMAINS HURTLE DOWNWARD!
I'VE GOT TO REACH KILLMONGER.
T'CHALLA...I... I DON'T WANT YOU KILLED!
I DIDN'T WANT ANY OF THIS, MONICA--BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN LEFT MUCH CHOICE, HAVE I?
THE MOUTH OPENS IN PROTEST, A GROWL ERUPTING FROM A THROAT THAT IS TORN RAGGEDLY AND DOES NOT YET REALIZE IT IS NO LONGER SUPPOSED TO WORK!
RADIO SONAR GLIDER SECTOR TWO, TAKU...AND TELL THEM TO OVERTAKE THAT REGIMENT. AND TELL THEM NOT TO FAIL!
I'M COMING FOR YOU, KILL-MONGER ...AND NOTHING'S GOING TO STOP ME!
THE HEAD ALONE IS TREMENDOUSLY HEAVY...HEAVY ENOUGH TO CRUSH HUMAN FLESH AND BONE!
WHICH IT ALMOST DOES!
MY CHIEFTAIN, WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM THE HOSPITAL COMPOUND!
SOME OF THE CREATURES ARE BEING DIRECTED STRAIGHT AT IT!

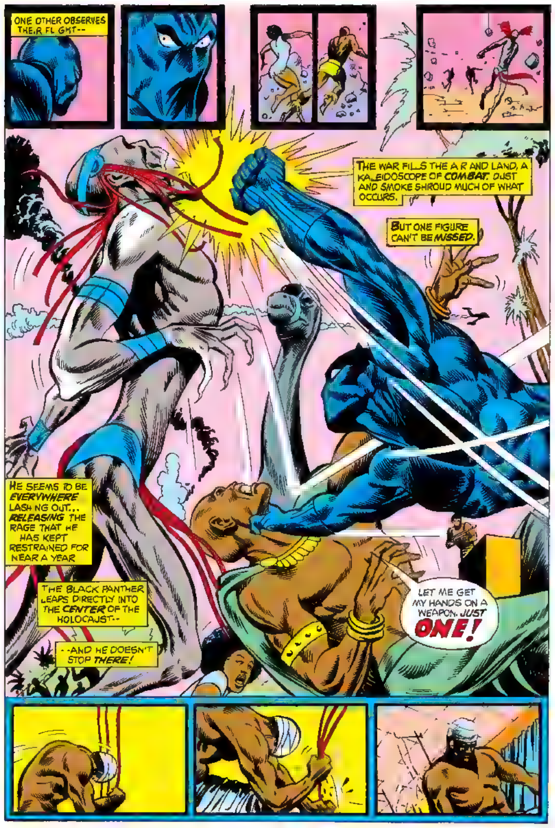

THEY STAND ON THE PERIMETERS OF VIOLENCE...AND THE WAR SEPARATES THEM. THAT LINE IS DISTINCT, BUT THE OTHER ELEMENTS THAT DIVIDE THEM ARE LESS DEFINED. IDEOLOGIES IN CONFLICT...NOW LOST!
PLACE A THOUSAND WARRIORS IN MY PATH, KILLMONGER--
--AND HOWEVER MANY MONSTERS YOU CAN MUSTER...AND IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH TO STOP ME!
IT'S HIM! THE PANTHER-DEVIL IS COMING THIS WAY, KAZIBE!
MEEE?! IT'S YOU HE'S AFTER, TAYETE!
NO, KAZIBE! IT'S OBVIOUSLY YOU HE SEEKS! LOOK AT THE WAY HE'S GLARING RIGHT AT YOU.
ME?
BUT DON'T WORRY...
I'LL PROTECT YOU!
I WON'T MOVE FROM THIS SPOT--
--AND HE CAN'T MAKE ME.
GET OUT OF MY WAY, TAYETE!
YES, PANTHER-DEVIL. RIGHT AWAY, PANTHER-DEVIL.
AND STOP CALLING ME PANTHER-DEVIL!



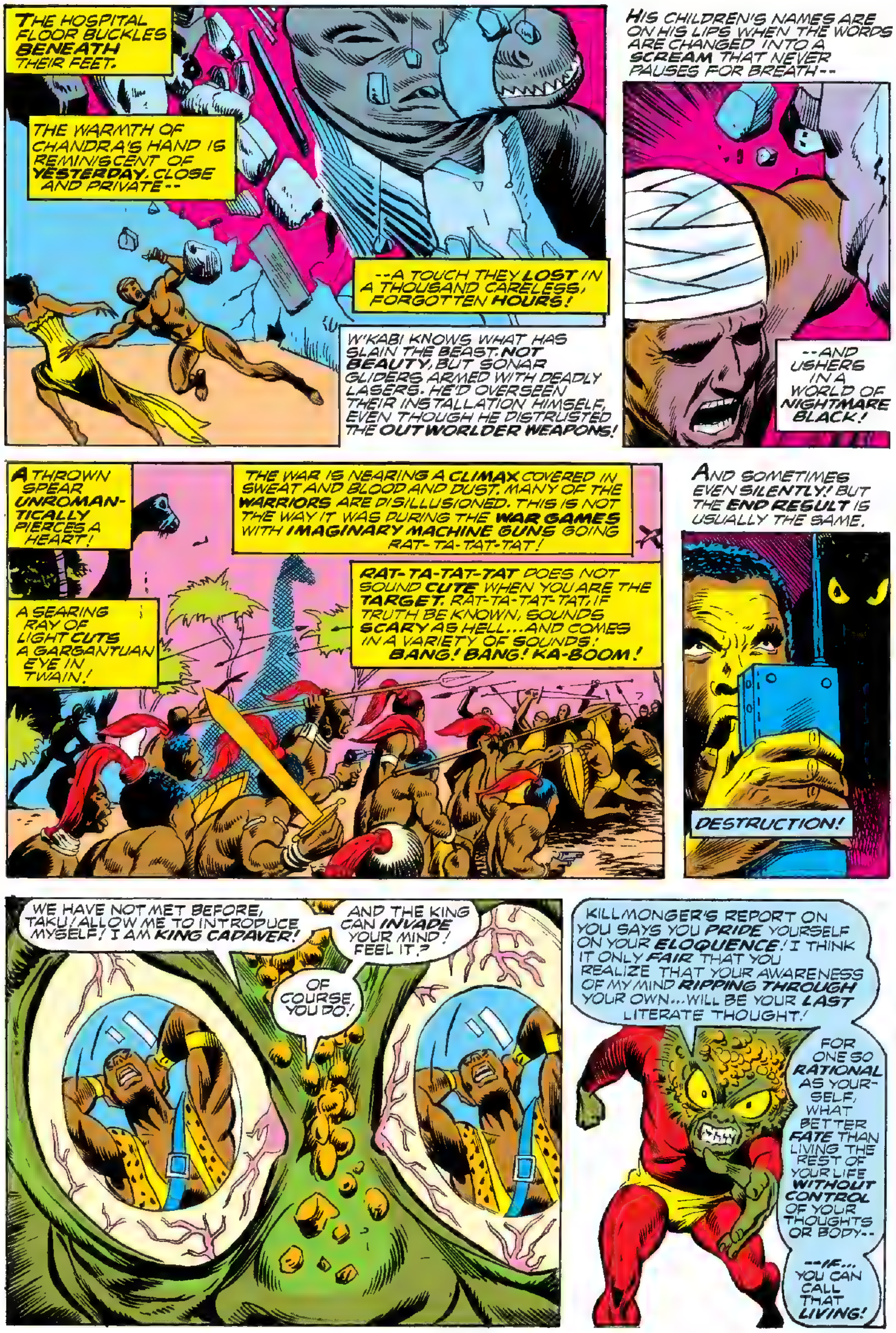
LIVES/ CRIMSON/ SPLATTERED/ SPILLING/ FILLING A NEVER ENDING OCEAN/ DEPTHS OF PAIN AND LOSS/ ALGAE OF GRIEF AND DEATH/ CORAL WAVING TATTERED RIBBONS OF FLESH. IDEOLOGY CONSUMED BY THE BRUTAL ACTS PERPETRATED IN ITS NAME.
YOU MOVED, TAYETE!
I KNOW I MOVED. DON'T YOU THINK I KNOW THAT? BUT GUESS WHAT?
WHAT?
I HOPE HE GETS KILLMONGER!
TAYETE, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? KILLMONGER WILL CUT OUT BOTH OUR TONGUES FOR WHAT YOURS HAS SAID!
"GOOD MORNING, T'CHALLA. I HADN'T EXPECTED TO SEE YOU HERE. I'D THOUGHT WE'D SPOKEN OUR FINAL WORDS BACK IN SERPENT VALLEY. YOU DO DISPLAY SOME TALENT AT SURVIVAL!
"AND YOU ARE STILL AS PERSISTENT IN YOUR FOOLISHNESS. YOU WANT A FIELD OF HONOR TO BATTLE ON, T'CHALLA. BLOODSHED WITH DIGNITY!
"IF YOU WEREN'T SUCH A DREAMER, YOU'D REALIZE THERE IS NO DIGNITY IN ANY OF THIS.
BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE NOT DEAD. THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE. THE LAST BATTLE WOULD BE ANTI-CLIMACTIC IF YOU WEREN'T HERE.
COME T'CHALLA. FIGHT YOUR WAY TO ME. IF YOU CAN'T...YOU'RE NOT WORTH THE TIME I'VE SPENT TALKING TO YOU.
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU WHERE WE FIRST MET--
"--AT WARRIOR FALLS.
"IT WILL GIVE OUR BATTLE A SENSE OF SYMMETRY!"

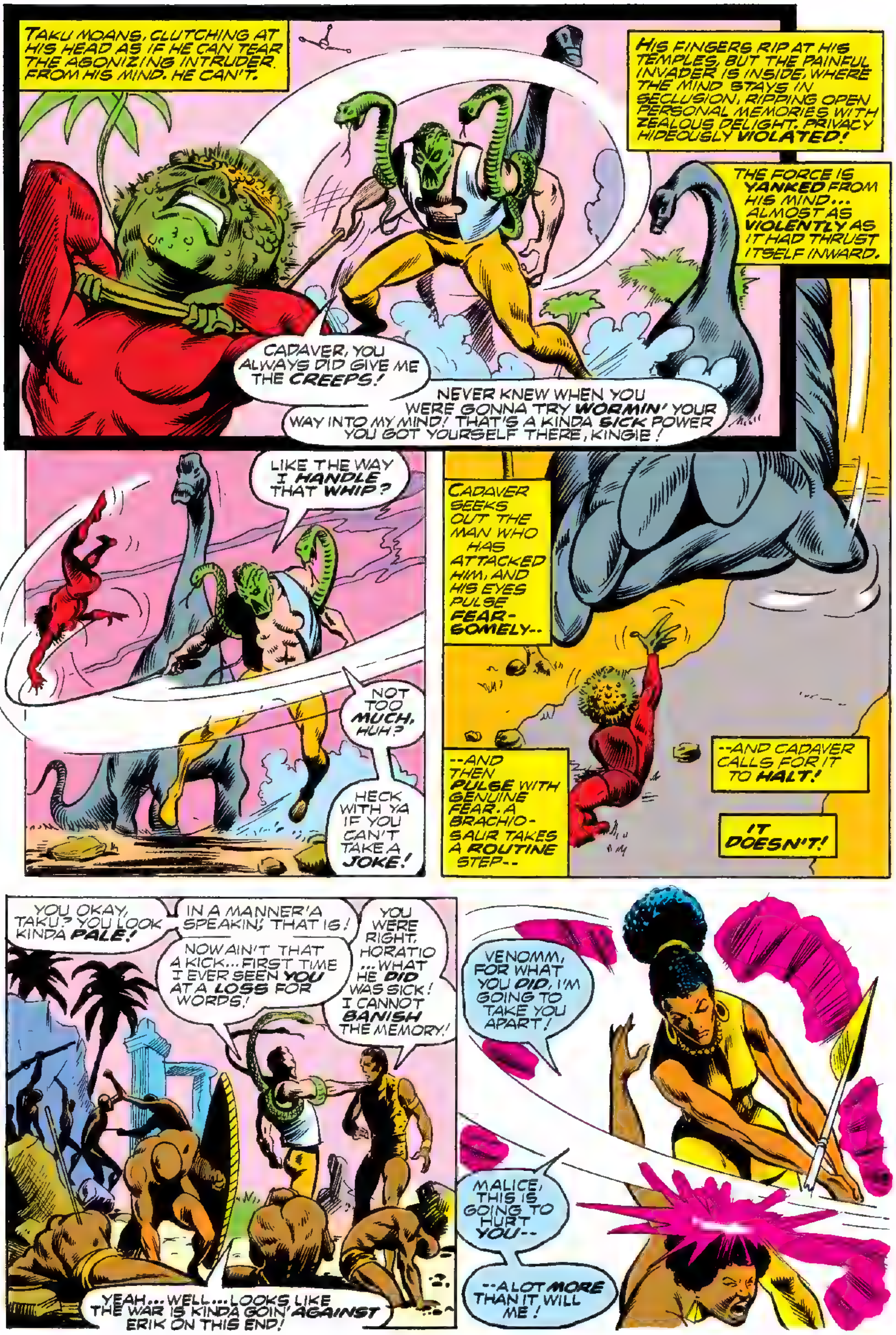

W'KABI IS CERTAIN HE WILL NEVER GET USED TO THE ODOR THAT FILLS HIS HOSPITAL ROOM-- MORTALITY SMOTHERED BY DISINFECTANT. THE FEW TRIBAL DECORATIONS ON THE WALL ARE FAMILIAR... BUT THEY ARE ONLY TOKEN REMINDERS OF WAKANDAN TRADITION.
AND W'KABI IS NOT QUITE SURE HE TRUSTS THE STRANGE THINGS THAT PUNCTURE HIS ARM AND FEED HIM. A MAN EATS THROUGH HIS MOUTH... NOT HIS ARM!
PLASMA
WHOLE BLOOD
HIS SONS DO NOT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND IT EITHER, NOR WHY THEIR FATHER IS IN THIS PLACE. W'KABI WISHES CHANDRA WOULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH HIM TENDERLY... AND CURSES HIMSELF FOR HAVING SUCH A NEED.
I'M SORRY THIS HAD TO HAPPEN, W'KABI. LIFE HAS BEEN DIFFICULT ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US WITHOUT EITHER OF US BEING HURT ANYMORE.
T'CHALLA WAS HERE LAST NIGHT. HE TRIED TO SPEAK TO ME OF LOVE, CHANDRA.
BUT WHAT DOES HE KNOW OF IT? RIVERSIDE WHISPERS? HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE NIGHTS I LIE BESIDE YOU, LISTENING TO YOU SLEEP AND KNOWING I'D STILL BE LOCKED OUT IF YOU WERE AWAKE.
IT HAS BEEN LONG SINCE I HAD SOMEONE ...DESIRE ME.
DON'T MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT, W'KABI. I TOLD YOU... I WAS LOST IN YOUR SHADOW.
BUT I NEVER TRIED TO DO THAT TO YOU.
I DID NOT SAY YOU DID. I MERELY SAID, THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED.
CHANDRA LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW, AS IF ESCAPE FROM THE OPPRESSIVE ROOM AND HER LIFE LIES RIGHT OUTSIDE THE GLASS.
NOT TODAY, IT DOESN'T!


THE PALACE ARCHITECTURE HOLDS FIRM FOR ONE LAST MOMENT, BEFORE THE BRACHIOSAUR'S WEIGHT FORCES IT INWARD. THE INTRICATELY HAND-CRAFTED FRIEZE-WORK RIPS APART.
ONCE THOSE ROCK-CARVED MURALS TOLD A STORY...A SUBLIME PARABLE IN PICTURES COMPLETE WITH MORAL. A STORY TO CHARM THE HEART AND MIND.
MOST OF THOSE WHO SPENT TIME IN THE PALACE HAD ALREADY FORGOTTEN THE STORY'S EXISTENCE...IT WAS MERELY ETCHINGS ON THE WALLS BY WHICH THEY PASSED.
THEY SELDOM CONSIDERED ITS MORAL...NOW THEY'LL NEVER HAVE THE TIME.
THE HUGE PANTHER STATUE WHICH HELD REIN OVER THE THRONE ROOM CRUMPLES TO BLUE-BLACK DUST.
THE BRACHIOSAURS TRY TO REAR AWAY FROM THE BUILDING. THE FLOORING GIVES UNDER THEIR TREAD.
AND ONE LEG BATTERS THROUGH THE PRISON CELLS.
THE PRISONERS MAKE THE MOST OF IT.
BETTER GET A STEP ON IT, KARNAJ, BEFORE THE REST OF THIS PLACE COMES DOWN ON US AND KEEPS US HERE PERMANENTLY.
I KEEP TELLING YOU, IT'S LORD KARNAJ.
OH YEAH. I KEEP FORGETTING, KARNAJ.
LET ME GET MY HANDS ON ONE OF MY SONIC DISRUPTORS, MALICE... AND I'LL MAKE SURE YOU REMEMBER.
KILLMONGER'S FINALLY DONE WHAT HE'D SAID HE'D DO.... BRING THIS PLACE DOWN AROUND T'CHALLA'S EARS!
HEY...WAIT... HELP ME OUTTA HERE.
SORRY, FRIEND ..YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!
AND AS THEY FLEE THE RUINS, ONE MAN WATCHES ...VENOMM!

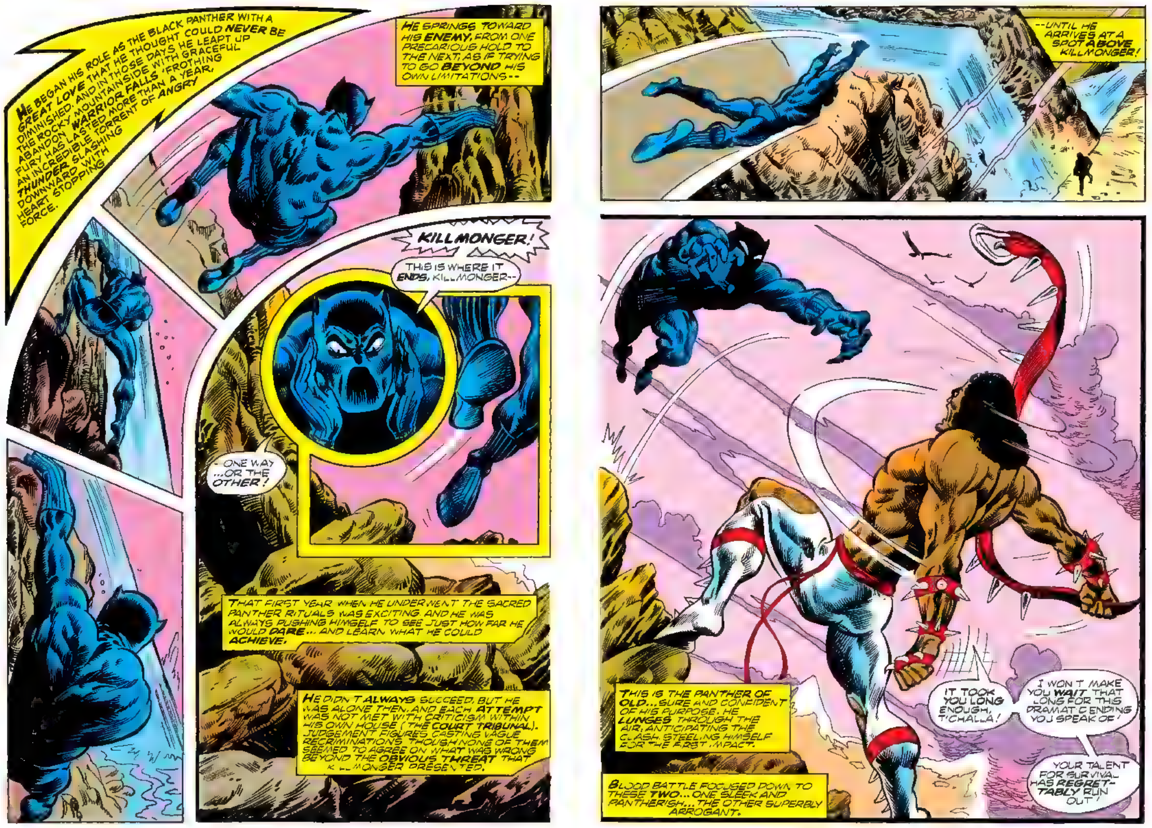

ONE OTHER OBSERVES THEIR FLIGHT--
THE WAR FILLS THE AIR AND LAND, A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COMBAT. DUST AND SMOKE SHROUD MUCH OF WHAT OCCURS.
BUT ONE FIGURE CAN'T BE MISSED.
HE SEEMS TO BE EVERYWHERE LASHING OUT... RELEASING THE RAGE THAT HE HAS KEPT RESTRAINED FOR NEAR A YEAR
THE BLACK PANTHER LEAPS DIRECTLY INTO THE CENTER OF THE HOLOCAUST--
--AND HE DOESN'T STOP THERE!
LET ME GET MY HANDS ON A WEAPON. JUST ONE!

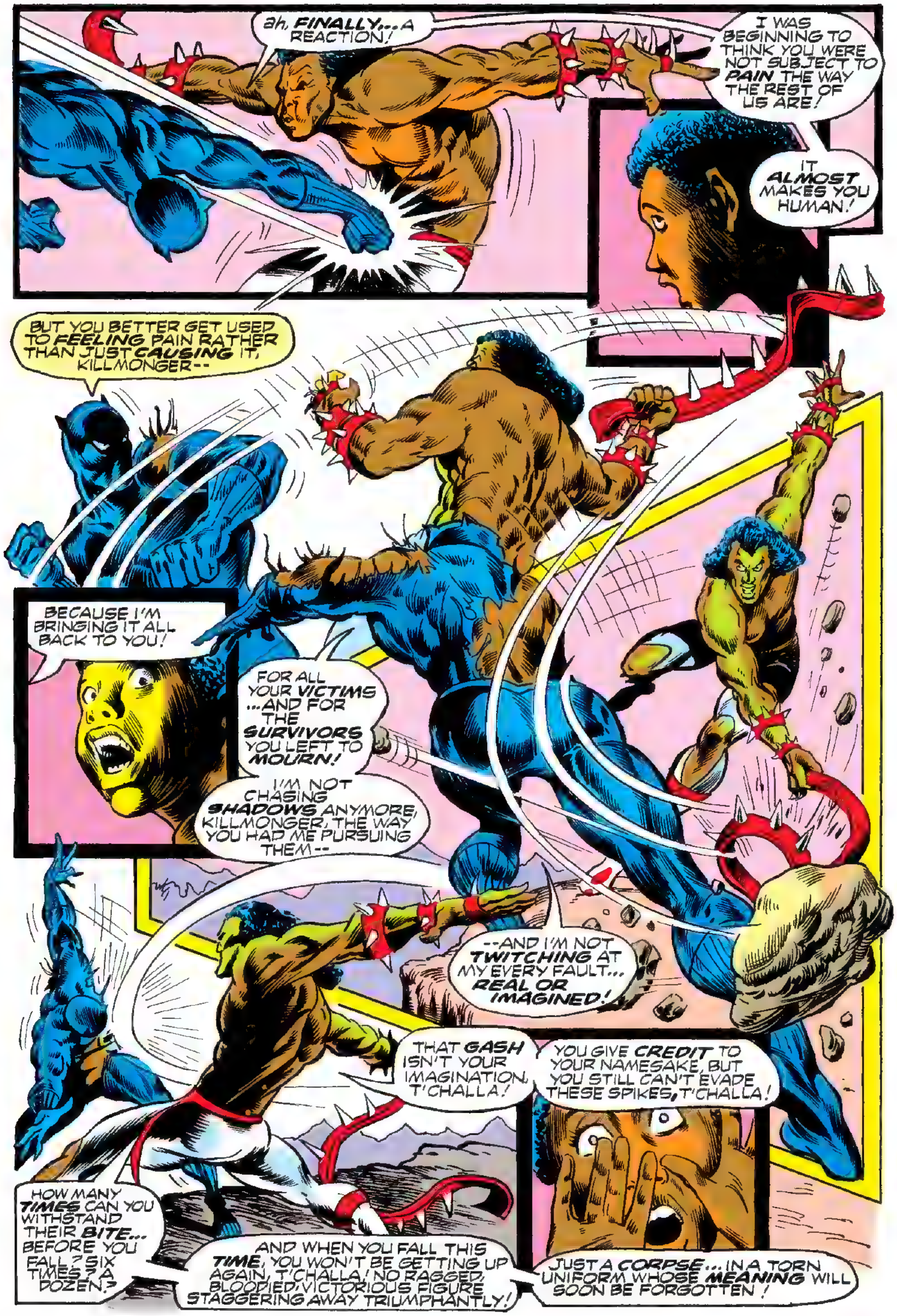
--ONLY THIS ONE DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
YOU'VE HAD YOUR CHANCE, KARNAJ!
AND THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO, MACABRE!


THE HOSPITAL FLOOR BUCKLES BENEATH THEIR FEET.
THE WARMTH OF CHANDRA'S HAND IS REMINISCENT OF YESTERDAY. CLOSE AND PRIVATE--
--A TOUCH THEY LOST IN A THOUSAND CARELESS, FORGOTTEN HOURS!
W'KABI KNOWS WHAT HAS SLAIN THE BEAST: NOT BEAUTY, BUT SONAR GLIDERS ARMED WITH DEADLY LASERS. HE'D OVERSEEN THEIR INSTALLATION HIMSELF, EVEN THOUGH HE DISTRUSTED THE OUTWORLDER WEAPONS!
HIS CHILDREN'S NAMES ARE ON HIS LIPS WHEN THE WORDS ARE CHANGED INTO A SCREAM THAT NEVER PAUSES FOR BREATH--
--AND USHERS IN A WORLD OF NIGHTMARE BLACK!
A THROWN SPEAR UNROMANTICALLY PIERCES A HEART!
THE WAR IS NEARING A CLIMAX COVERED IN SWEAT AND BLOOD AND DUST. MANY OF THE WARRIORS ARE DISILLUSIONED. THIS IS NOT THE WAY IT WAS DURING THE WAR GAMES WITH IMAGINARY MACHINE GUNS GOING RAT-TA-TAT-TAT!
A SEARING RAY OF LIGHT CUTS A GARGANTUAN EYE IN TWAIN!
RAT-TA-TAT-TAT DOES NOT SOUND CUTE WHEN YOU ARE THE TARGET. RAT-TA-TAT-TAT, IF TRUTH BE KNOWN, SOUNDS SCARY AS HELL...AND COMES IN A VARIETY OF SOUNDS: BANG! BANG! KA-BOOM!
AND SOMETIMES EVEN SILENTLY! BUT THE END RESULT IS USUALLY THE SAME.
DESTRUCTION!
WE HAVE NOT MET BEFORE, TAKU! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! I AM KING CADAVER!
AND THE KING CAN INVADE YOUR MIND! FEEL IT?
OF COURSE YOU DO!
KILLMONGER'S REPORT ON YOU SAYS YOU PRIDE YOURSELF ON YOUR ELOQUENCE! I THINK IT ONLY FAIR THAT YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR AWARENESS OF MY MIND RIPPING THROUGH YOUR OWN...WILL BE YOUR LAST LITERATE THOUGHT!
FOR ONE SO RATIONAL AS YOURSELF, WHAT BETTER FATE THAN LIVING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE WITHOUT CONTROL OF YOUR THOUGHTS OR BODY--
--IF...YOU CAN CALL THAT LIVING!

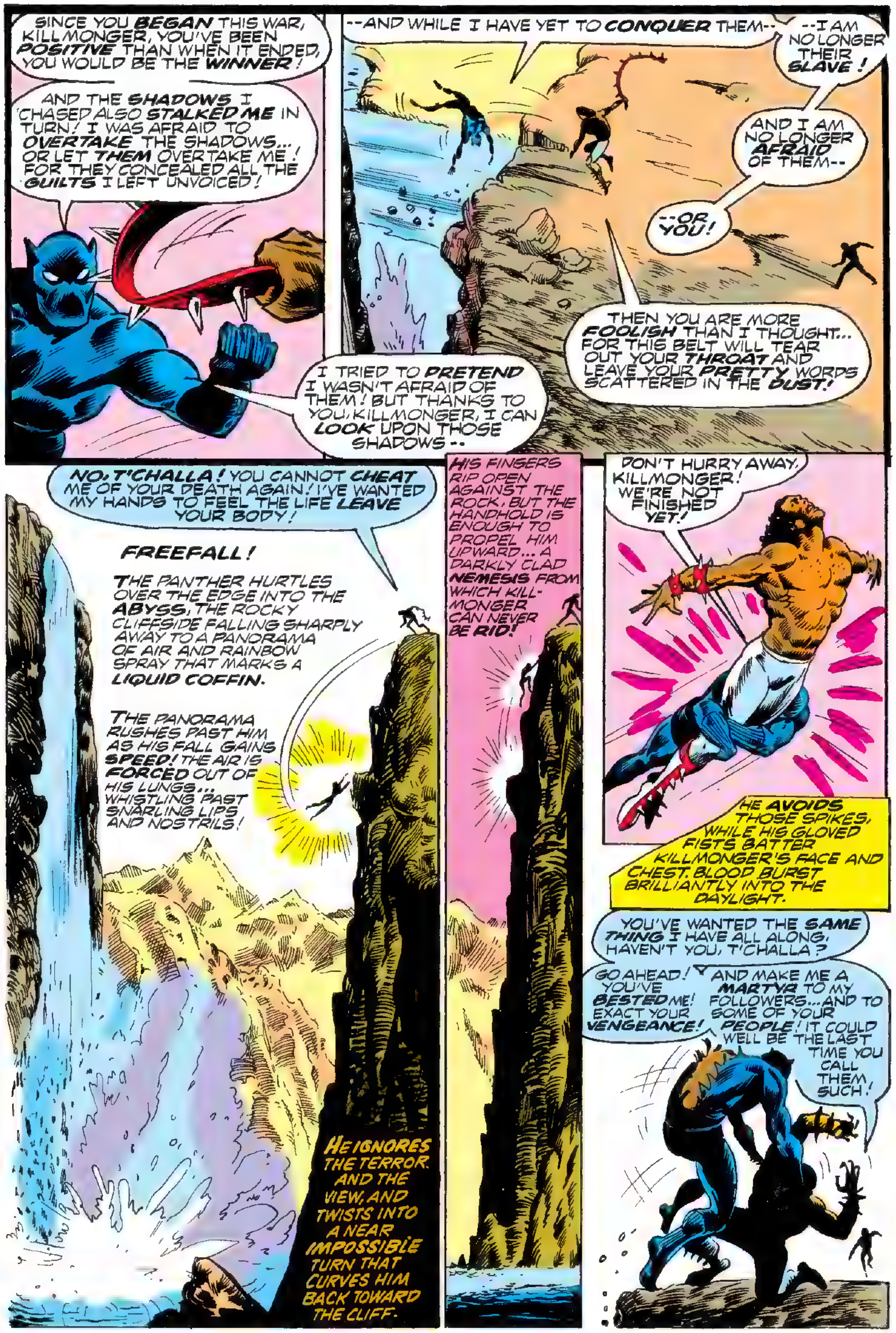


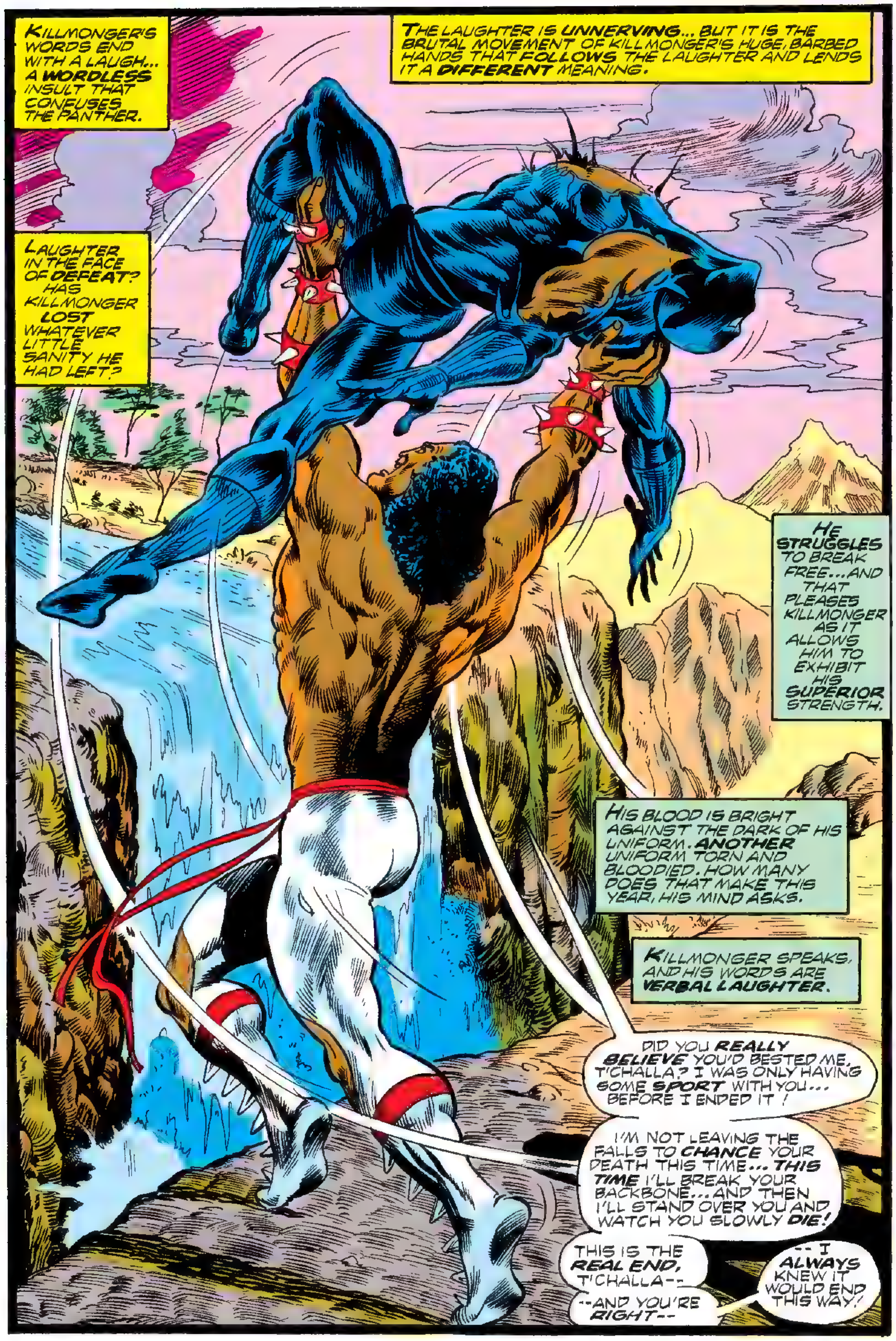
TAKU MOANS, CLUTCHING AT HIS HEAD AS IF HE CAN TEAR THE AGONIZING INTRUDER FROM HIS MIND. HE CAN'T.
HIS FINGERS RIP AT HIS TEMPLES, BUT THE PAINFUL INVADER IS INSIDE, WHERE THE MIND STAYS IN SECLUSION, RIPPING OPEN PERSONAL MEMORIES WITH ZEALOUS DELIGHT. PRIVACY HIDEOUSLY VIOLATED!
THE FORCE IS YANKED FROM HIS MIND... ALMOST AS VIOLENTLY AS IT HAD THRUST ITSELF INWARD.
CADAVER, YOU ALWAYS DID GIVE ME THE CREEPS!
NEVER KNEW WHEN YOU WERE GONNA TRY WORMIN' YOUR WAY INTO MY MIND! THAT'S A KINDA SICK POWER YOU GOT YOURSELF THERE, KINGIE!
LIKE THE WAY I HANDLE THAT WHIP?
NOT TOO MUCH, HUH?
HECK WITH YA IF YOU CAN'T TAKE A JOKE!
CADAVER SEEKS OUT THE MAN WHO HAS ATTACKED HIM, AND HIS EYES PULSE FEAR-SOMELY--
--AND THEN PULSE WITH GENUINE FEAR. A BRACHIO-SAUR TAKES A ROUTINE STEP--
--AND CADAVER CALLS FOR IT TO HALT!
IT DOESN'T!
YOU OKAY, TAKU? YOU LOOK KINDA PALE!
IN A MANNER'A SPEAKIN', THAT IS!
NOW AIN'T THAT A KICK... FIRST TIME I EVER SEEN YOU AT A LOSS FOR WORDS!
YOU WERE RIGHT, HORATIO ...WHAT HE DID WAS SICK! I CANNOT BANISH THE MEMORY!
YEAH... WELL... LOOKS LIKE THE WAR IS KINDA GOIN' AGAINST ERIK ON THIS END!
VENOMM, FOR WHAT YOU DID, I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU APART!
MALICE, THIS IS GOING TO HURT YOU--
--A LOT MORE THAN IT WILL ME!


HE BEGAN HIS ROLE AS THE BLACK PANTHER WITH A GREAT LOVE THAT HE THOUGHT COULD NEVER BE DIMINISHED. AND IN THOSE DAYS HE LEAPT UP THE ROCKY MOUNTAINSIDE WITH GRACEFUL ABANDON. WARRIOR FALLS 'FROTHING FURY HAS LASTED MORE THAN A YEAR, AN INCREDIBLE TORRENT OF ANGRY THUNDER SLASHING DOWNWARD WITH HEART STOPPING FORCE.
HE SPRINGS TOWARD HIS ENEMY, FROM ONE PRECARIOUS HOLD TO THE NEXT, AS IF TRYING TO GO BEYOND HIS OWN LIMITATIONS--
--UNTIL HE ARRIVES AT A SPOT ABOVE KILLMONGER!
KILLMONGER!
THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS, KILLMONGER--
--ONE WAY ...OR THE OTHER!
THAT FIRST YEAR WHEN HE UNDERWENT THE SACRED PANTHER RITUALS WAS EXCITING. AND HE WAS ALWAYS PUSHING HIMSELF TO SEE JUST HOW FAR HE WOULD DARE... AND LEARN WHAT HE COULD ACHIEVE.
HE DIDN'T ALWAYS SUCCEED, BUT HE WAS ALONE THEN, AND EACH ATTEMPT WAS NOT MET WITH CRITICISM WITHIN HIS OWN HOUSE (THE COURT TRIBUNAL). JUDGEMENT FIGURES CASTING VAGUE RECRIMINATIONS THOUGH NONE OF THEM SEEMED TO AGREE ON WHAT WAS WRONG BEYOND THE OBVIOUS THREAT THAT KILLMONGER PRESENTED.
THIS IS THE PANTHER OF OLD... SURE AND CONFIDENT OF HIS PURPOSE. HE LUNGES THROUGH THE AIR, ANTICIPATING THE CLASH, STEELING HIMSELF FOR THE FIRST IMPACT.
IT TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH, T'CHALLA!
I WON'T MAKE YOU WAIT THAT LONG FOR THIS DRAMATIC ENDING YOU SPEAK OF!
YOUR TALENT FOR SURVIVAL HAS REGRETTABLY RUN OUT!
BLOOD BATTLE FOCUSED DOWN TO THESE TWO... ONE SLEEK AND PANTHERISH... THE OTHER SUPERBLY ARROGANT.



ah, FINALLY... A REACTION!
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU WERE NOT SUBJECT TO PAIN THE WAY THE REST OF US ARE!
IT ALMOST MAKES YOU HUMAN!
BUT YOU BETTER GET USED TO FEELING PAIN RATHER THAN JUST CAUSING IT, KILLMONGER--
BECAUSE I'M BRINGING IT ALL BACK TO YOU!
FOR ALL YOUR VICTIMS ...AND FOR THE SURVIVORS YOU LEFT TO MOURN!
I'M NOT CHASING SHADOWS ANYMORE, KILLMONGER, THE WAY YOU HAD ME PURSUING THEM--
--AND I'M NOT TWITCHING AT MY EVERY FAULT... REAL OR IMAGINED!
THAT GASH ISN'T YOUR IMAGINATION, T'CHALLA!
YOU GIVE CREDIT TO YOUR NAMESAKE, BUT YOU STILL CAN'T EVADE THESE SPIKES, T'CHALLA!
HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU WITHSTAND THEIR BITE... BEFORE YOU FALL? SIX TIMES? A DOZEN?
AND WHEN YOU FALL THIS TIME, YOU WON'T BE GETTING UP AGAIN, T'CHALLA! NO RAGGED, BLOODIED, VICTORIOUS FIGURE STAGGERING AWAY TRIUMPHANTLY!
JUST A CORPSE ... IN A TORN UNIFORM WHOSE MEANING WILL SOON BE FORGOTTEN!


SINCE YOU BEGAN THIS WAR, KILLMONGER, YOU'VE BEEN POSITIVE THAN WHEN IT ENDED, YOU WOULD BE THE WINNER!
AND THE SHADOWS I CHASED ALSO STALKED ME IN TURN! I WAS AFRAID TO OVERTAKE THE SHADOWS... OR LET THEM OVERTAKE ME! FOR THEY CONCEALED ALL THE GUILTS I LEFT UNVOICED!
I TRIED TO PRETEND I WASN'T AFRAID OF THEM! BUT THANKS TO YOU, KILLMONGER, I CAN LOOK UPON THOSE SHADOWS--
--AND WHILE I HAVE YET TO CONQUER THEM--
--I AM NO LONGER THEIR SLAVE!
AND I AM NO LONGER AFRAID OF THEM--
--OR YOU!
THEN YOU ARE MORE FOOLISH THAN I THOUGHT... FOR THIS BELT WILL TEAR OUT YOUR THROAT AND LEAVE YOUR PRETTY WORDS SCATTERED IN THE DUST!
NO, T'CHALLA! YOU CANNOT CHEAT ME OF YOUR DEATH AGAIN! I'VE WANTED MY HANDS TO FEEL THE LIFE LEAVE YOUR BODY!
FREEFALL!
THE PANTHER HURTLES OVER THE EDGE INTO THE ABYSS, THE ROCKY CLIFFSIDE FALLING SHARPLY AWAY TO A PANORAMA OF AIR AND RAINBOW SPRAY THAT MARKS A LIQUID COFFIN.
THE PANORAMA RUSHES PAST HIM AS HIS FALL GAINS SPEED! THE AIR IS FORCED OUT OF HIS LUNGS... WHISTLING PAST SNARLING LIPS AND NOSTRILS!
HE IGNORES THE TERROR AND THE VIEW, AND TWISTS INTO A NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TURN THAT CURVES HIM BACK TOWARD THE CLIFF.
HIS FINGERS RIP OPEN AGAINST THE ROCK, BUT THE HANDHOLD IS ENOUGH TO PROPEL HIM UPWARD... A DARKLY CLAD NEMESIS FROM WHICH KILLMONGER CAN NEVER BE RID!
DON'T HURRY AWAY, KILLMONGER! WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET!
HE AVOIDS THOSE SPIKES, WHILE HIS GLOVED FISTS BATTER KILLMONGER'S FACE AND CHEST. BLOOD BURST BRILLIANTLY INTO THE DAYLIGHT.
YOU'VE WANTED THE SAME THING I HAVE ALL ALONG, HAVEN'T YOU, T'CHALLA?
GO AHEAD! YOU'VE BESTED ME! EXACT YOUR VENGEANCE!
AND MAKE ME A MARTYR TO MY FOLLOWERS...AND TO SOME OF YOUR PEOPLE! IT COULD WELL BE THE LAST TIME YOU CALL THEM SUCH!


KILLMONGER'S WORDS END WITH A LAUGH... A WORDLESS INSULT THAT CONFUSES THE PANTHER.
THE LAUGHTER IS UNNERVING... BUT IT IS THE BRUTAL MOVEMENT OF KILLMONGER'S HUGE, BARBED HANDS THAT FOLLOWS THE LAUGHTER AND LENDS IT A DIFFERENT MEANING.
LAUGHTER IN THE FACE OF DEFEAT? HAS KILLMONGER LOST WHATEVER LITTLE SANITY HE HAD LEFT?
HE STRUGGLES TO BREAK FREE...AND THAT PLEASES KILLMONGER AS IT ALLOWS HIM TO EXHIBIT HIS SUPERIOR STRENGTH.
HIS BLOOD IS BRIGHT AGAINST THE DARK OF HIS UNIFORM. ANOTHER UNIFORM TORN AND BLOODIED. HOW MANY DOES THAT MAKE THIS YEAR, HIS MIND ASKS.
KILLMONGER SPEAKS, AND HIS WORDS ARE VERBAL LAUGHTER.
DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU'D BESTED ME, T'CHALLA? I WAS ONLY HAVING SOME SPORT WITH YOU... BEFORE I ENDED IT!
I'M NOT LEAVING THE FALLS TO CHANCE YOUR DEATH THIS TIME... THIS TIME I'LL BREAK YOUR BACKBONE... AND THEN I'LL STAND OVER YOU AND WATCH YOU SLOWLY DIE!
THIS IS THE REAL END, T'CHALLA--
--AND YOU'RE RIGHT--
--I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD END THIS WAY!

KANTU CHARGES TOWARD THE FRAY, SCREAMING HIS RAGE IN A HIGH PITCHED VOICE THAT BREAKS. IT IS A TINY VOICE LOST IN VAST EVENTS, AND KILLMONGER IS ONE WHO HAS IGNORED THE ROARS OF DINOSAURS AND TURNED HIS BACK ON THEM. THIS IS ONE VOICE HE SHOULDN'T IGNORE!
THE PANTHER AND KILLMONGER'S EYES LOCK FOR ONE LAST TIME. THE EYES HOLD NO PANIC, RATHER A TRACE OF ANNOYANCE... AN UNSPOKEN "WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING?"
IT IS OVER WITH A SILENT DESCENT. KILLMONGER HITS THE CRASHING WHITE RAPIDS AND DISAPPEARS UNDER THE SURFACE.
NEITHER THE PANTHER NOR KANTU SPEAK. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AS IF THEY ARE SOMEHOW INEXPLICABLY ENTWINED. YOUTH AND ADULT FACING THE SAME ADVERSARY IN TIMELESS, VIOLENT ARENAS.
THEY WALK INTO THE FAMILIAR SUN AND FEEL ITS WARMTH FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT DAY. THE WAR HAS ENDED... AND THE ONLY SURVIVORS... ARE VICTIMS THEMSELVES!
-fin-

JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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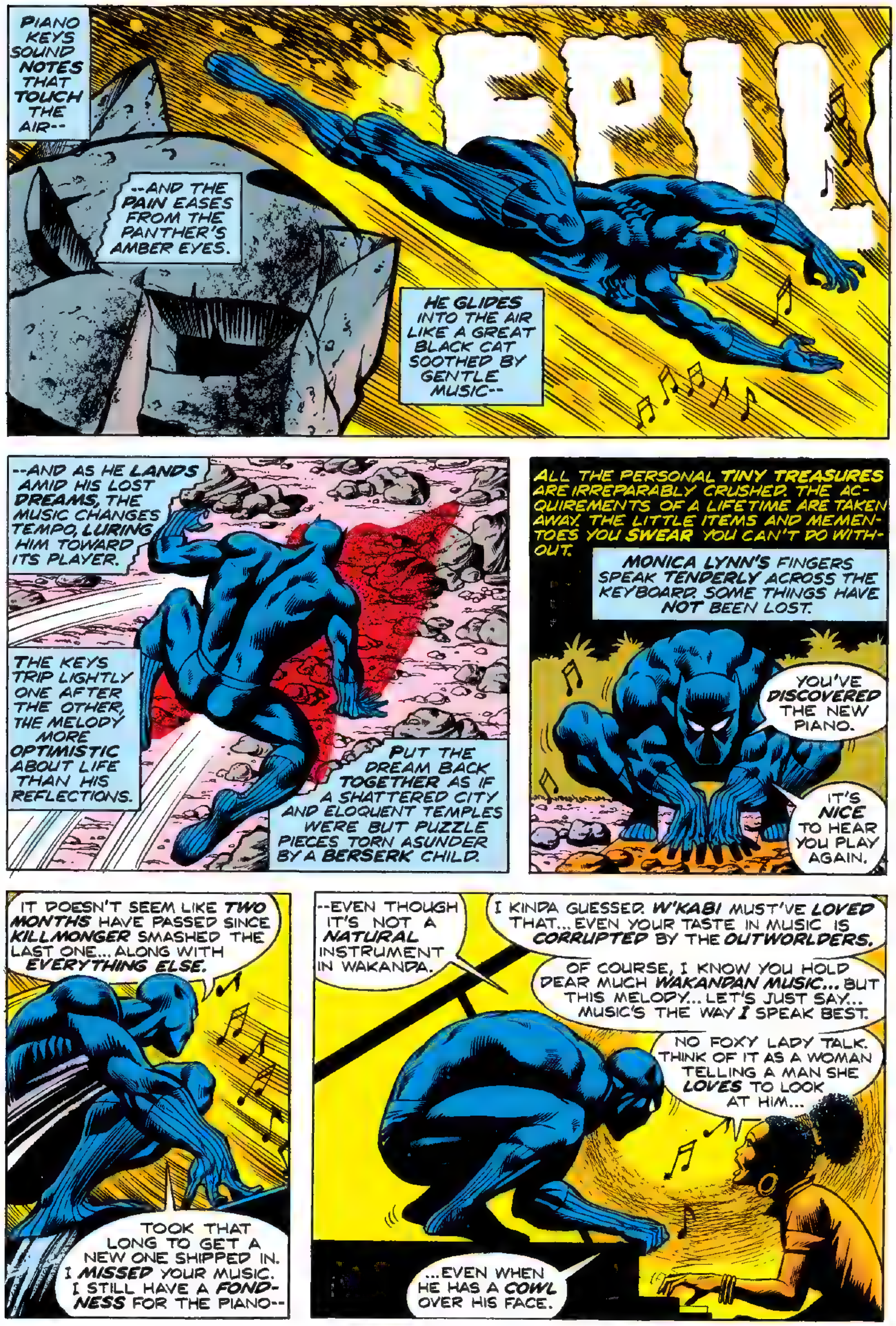
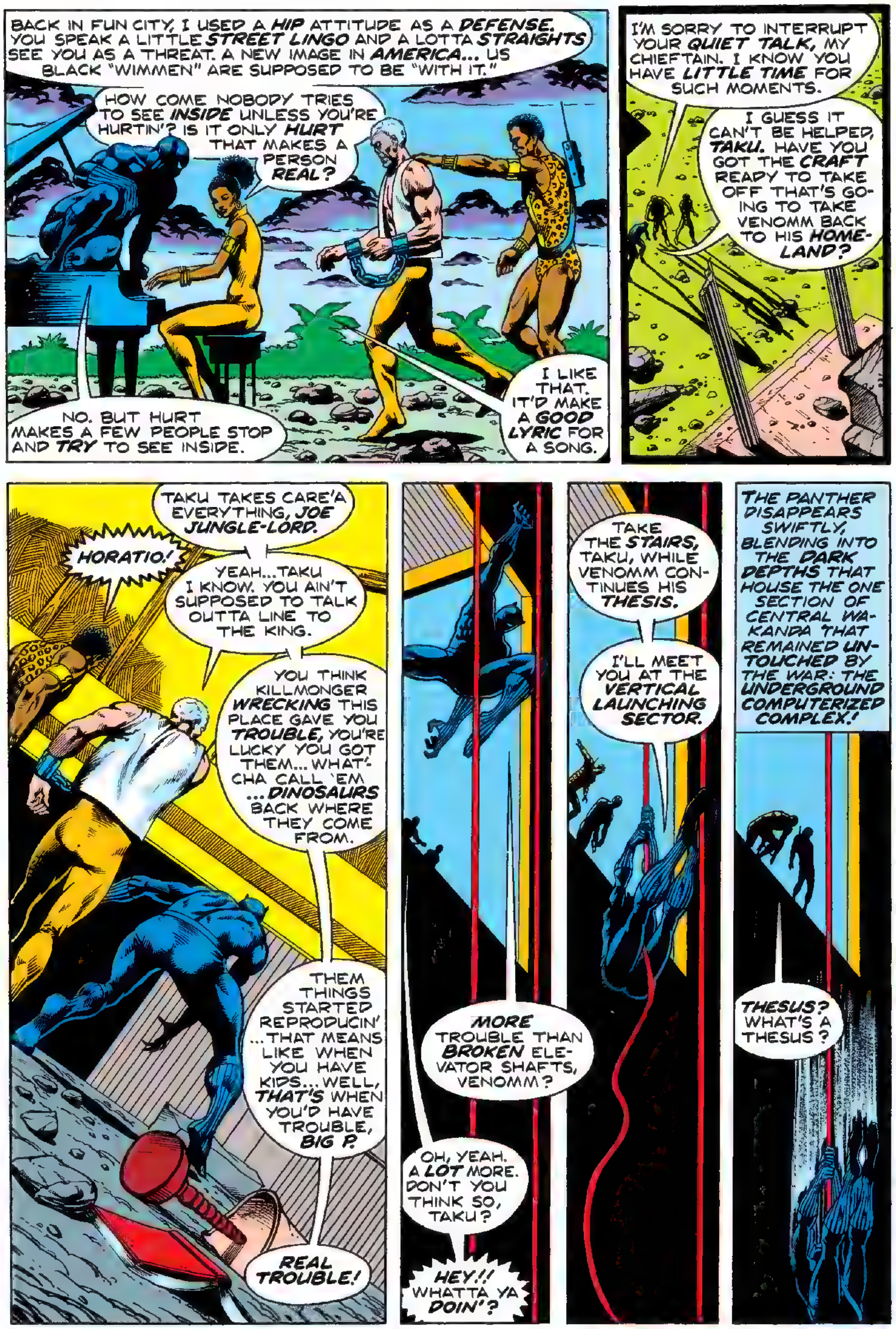
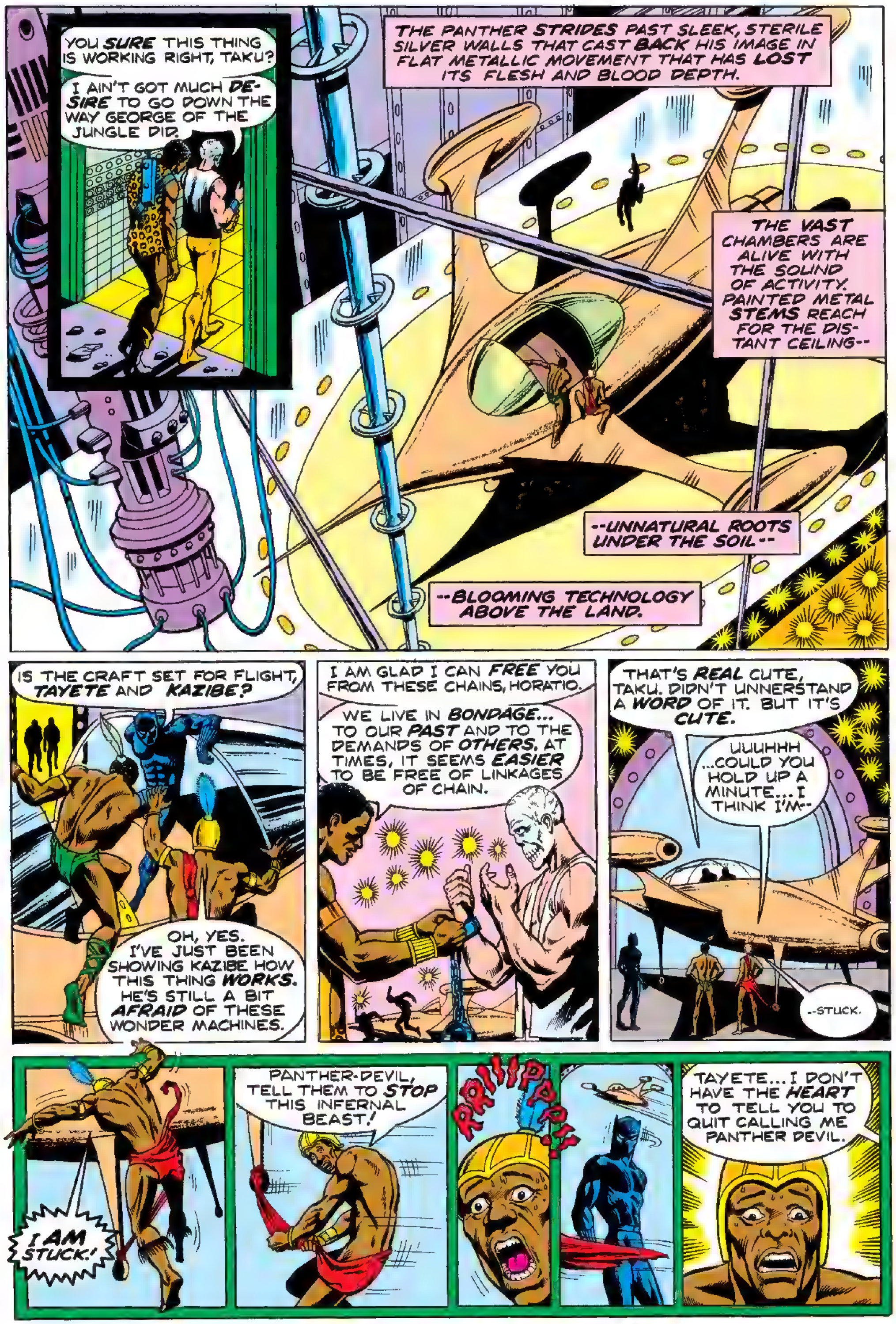
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
EPILOGUE OF DEATH!
RUN, MY PETS-- RUN!
LET THE PANTHER BE TORN TO PIECES AT THE COMMAND OF-- MADAME SLAY!

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
BLACK PANTHER!
EPILOGUE!
AFTERMATH!
A STUDY IN ASHES AND RUIN.
A LIVING PANTHER SURVEYS THE WRECKAGE FROM ATOP A STONE PANTHER WHICH ONCE GUARDED THE THRONE ROOM OF HIS PALACE ROYAL. NOW ONLY THE DECAPITATED AND RAVAGED HEAD REMAINS TO OVERLOOK THE THRONE ROOM THAT FELL WHEN ITS GUARDIAN DID!
DON McGREGOR WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST
BOB McLEOD INKER
LETTERER DAVE HUNT
COLORIST GLYNIS OLIVER WEIN
MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR


PIANO KEYS SOUND NOTES THAT TOUCH THE AIR--
--AND THE PAIN EASES FROM THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES.
HE GLIDES INTO THE AIR LIKE A GREAT BLACK CAT SOOTHED BY GENTLE MUSIC--
--AND AS HE LANDS AMID HIS LOST DREAMS, THE MUSIC CHANGES TEMPO, LURING HIM TOWARD ITS PLAYER.
THE KEYS TRIP LIGHTLY ONE AFTER THE OTHER, THE MELODY MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LIFE THAN HIS REFLECTIONS.
PUT THE DREAM BACK TOGETHER AS IF A SHATTERED CITY AND ELOQUENT TEMPLES WERE BUT PUZZLE PIECES TORN ASUNDER BY A BERSERK CHILD.
ALL THE PERSONAL TINY TREASURES ARE IRREPARABLY CRUSHED. THE ACQUIREMENTS OF A LIFETIME ARE TAKEN AWAY. THE LITTLE ITEMS AND MEMENTOES YOU SWEAR YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT.
MONICA LYNN'S FINGERS SPEAK TENDERLY ACROSS THE KEYBOARD. SOME THINGS HAVE NOT BEEN LOST.
YOU'VE DISCOVERED THE NEW PIANO.
IT'S NICE TO HEAR YOU PLAY AGAIN.
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE TWO MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE KILLMONGER SMASHED THE LAST ONE... ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.
TOOK THAT LONG TO GET A NEW ONE SHIPPED IN. I MISSED YOUR MUSIC. I STILL HAVE A FONDNESS FOR THE PIANO--
--EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT A NATURAL INSTRUMENT IN WAKANDA.
I KINDA GUESSED. W'KABI MUST'VE LOVED THAT... EVEN YOUR TASTE IN MUSIC IS CORRUPTED BY THE OUTWORLDERS.
OF COURSE, I KNOW YOU HOLD DEAR MUCH WAKANDAN MUSIC... BUT THIS MELODY... LET'S JUST SAY... MUSIC'S THE WAY I SPEAK BEST.
NO FOXY LADY TALK. THINK OF IT AS A WOMAN TELLING A MAN SHE LOVES TO LOOK AT HIM...
...EVEN WHEN HE HAS A COWL OVER HIS FACE.

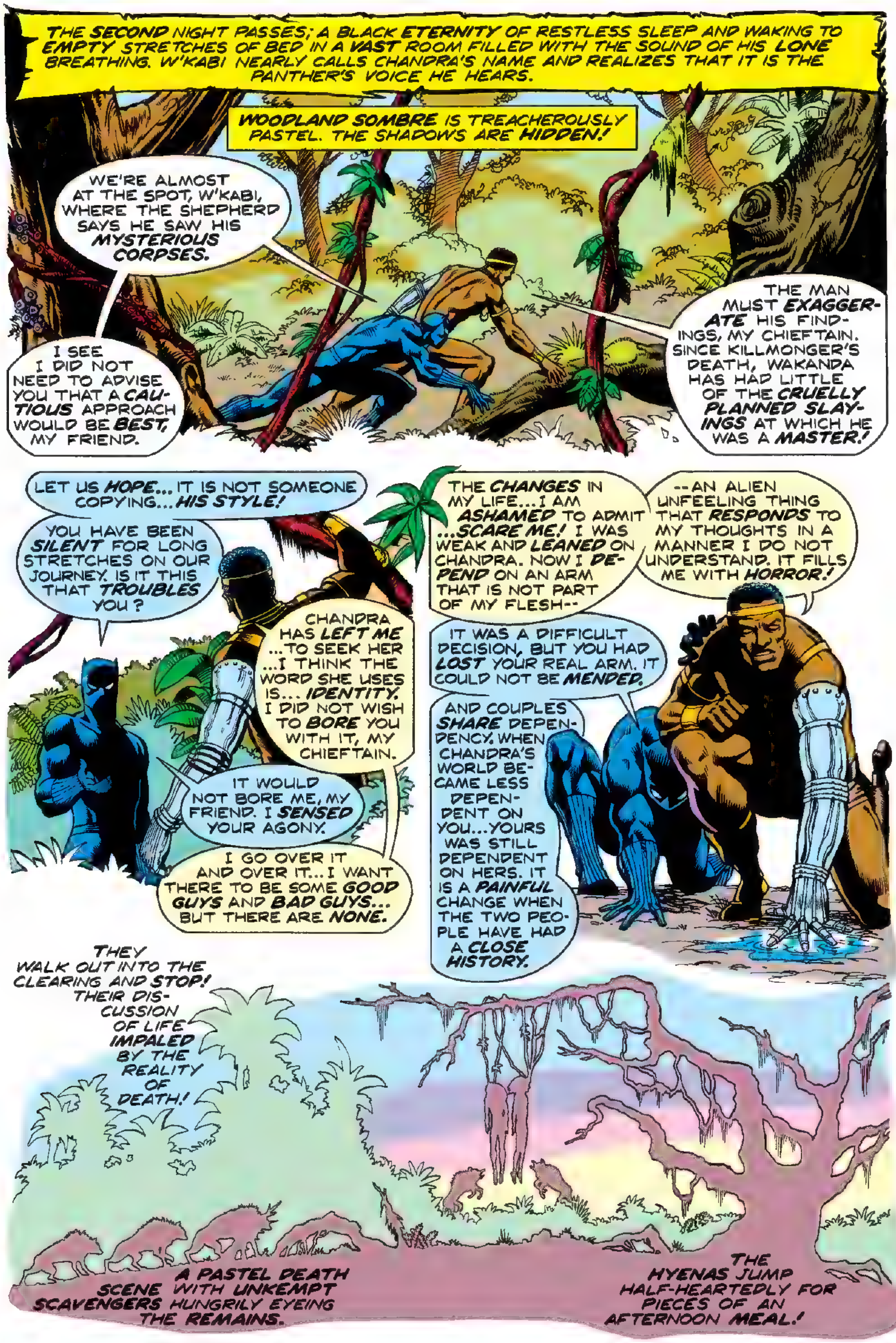

BACK IN FUN CITY, I USED A HIP ATTITUDE AS A DEFENSE. YOU SPEAK A LITTLE STREET LINGO AND A LOTTA STRAIGHTS SEE YOU AS A THREAT. A NEW IMAGE IN AMERICA... US BLACK "WIMMEN" ARE SUPPOSED TO BE "WITH IT."
HOW COME NOBODY TRIES TO SEE INSIDE UNLESS YOU'RE HURTIN'? IS IT ONLY HURT THAT MAKES A PERSON REAL?
NO. BUT HURT MAKES A FEW PEOPLE STOP AND TRY TO SEE INSIDE.
I LIKE THAT. IT'D MAKE A GOOD LYRIC FOR A SONG.
I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR QUIET TALK, MY CHIEFTAIN. I KNOW YOU HAVE LITTLE TIME FOR SUCH MOMENTS.
I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED, TAKU. HAVE YOU GOT THE CRAFT READY TO TAKE OFF THAT'S GOING TO TAKE VENOMM BACK TO HIS HOMELAND?
HORATIO!
TAKU TAKES CARE'A EVERYTHING, JOE JUNGLE-LORD.
YEAH...TAKU I KNOW. YOU AIN'T SUPPOSED TO TALK OUTTA LINE TO THE KING.
YOU THINK KILLMONGER WRECKING THIS PLACE GAVE YOU TROUBLE, YOU'RE LUCKY YOU GOT THEM... WHAT'CHA CALL 'EM ...DINOSAURS BACK WHERE THEY COME FROM.
THEM THINGS STARTED REPRODUCIN' ...THAT MEANS LIKE WHEN YOU HAVE KIDS... WELL, THAT'S WHEN YOU'D HAVE TROUBLE, BIG P.
REAL TROUBLE!
MORE TROUBLE THAN BROKEN ELEVATOR SHAFTS, VENOMM?
OH, YEAH. A LOT MORE. DON'T YOU THINK SO, TAKU?
HEY!! WHATTA YA DOIN'?
TAKE THE STAIRS, TAKU, WHILE VENOMM CONTINUES HIS THESIS.
I'LL MEET YOU AT THE VERTICAL LAUNCHING SECTOR.
THE PANTHER DISAPPEARS SWIFTLY, BLENDING INTO THE DARK DEPTHS THAT HOUSE THE ONE SECTION OF CENTRAL WAKANDA THAT REMAINED UNTOUCHED BY THE WAR: THE UNDERGROUND COMPUTERIZED COMPLEX!
THESUS? WHAT'S A THESUS?

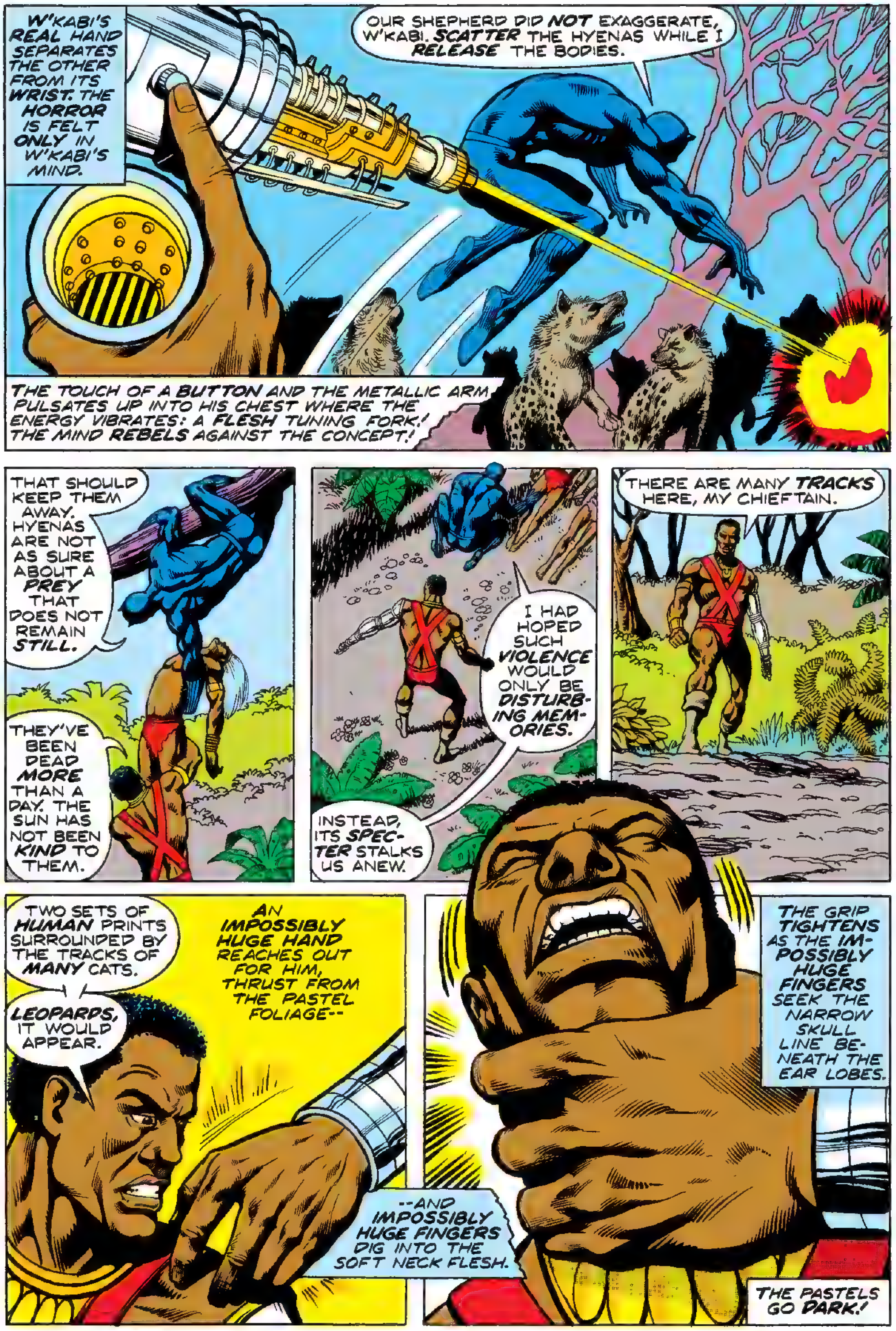


YOU SURE THIS THING IS WORKING RIGHT, TAKU?
I AIN'T GOT MUCH DESIRE TO GO DOWN THE WAY GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE DID.
THE PANTHER STRIDES PAST SLEEK, STERILE SILVER WALLS THAT CAST BACK HIS IMAGE IN FLAT METALLIC MOVEMENT THAT HAS LOST ITS FLESH AND BLOOD DEPTH.
THE VAST CHAMBERS ARE ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF ACTIVITY. PAINTED METAL STEMS REACH FOR THE DISTANT CEILING--
--UNNATURAL ROOTS UNDER THE SOIL--
--BLOOMING TECHNOLOGY ABOVE THE LAND.
IS THE CRAFT SET FOR FLIGHT, TAYETE AND KAZIBE?
OH, YES. I'VE JUST BEEN SHOWING KAZIBE HOW THIS THING WORKS. HE'S STILL A BIT AFRAID OF THESE WONDER MACHINES.
I AM GLAD I CAN FREE YOU FROM THESE CHAINS, HORATIO.
WE LIVE IN BONDAGE... TO OUR PAST AND TO THE DEMANDS OF OTHERS. AT TIMES, IT SEEMS EASIER TO BE FREE OF LINKAGES OF CHAIN.
THAT'S REAL CUTE, TAKU. DIDN'T UNNERSTAND A WORD OF IT. BUT IT'S CUTE.
UUUHHH ...COULD YOU HOLD UP A MINUTE... I THINK I'M--
--STUCK.
I AM STUCK!
PANTHER-DEVIL, TELL THEM TO STOP THIS INFERNAL BEAST!
RRIIIPPP!!
TAYETE... I DON'T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL YOU TO QUIT CALLING ME PANTHER DEVIL.

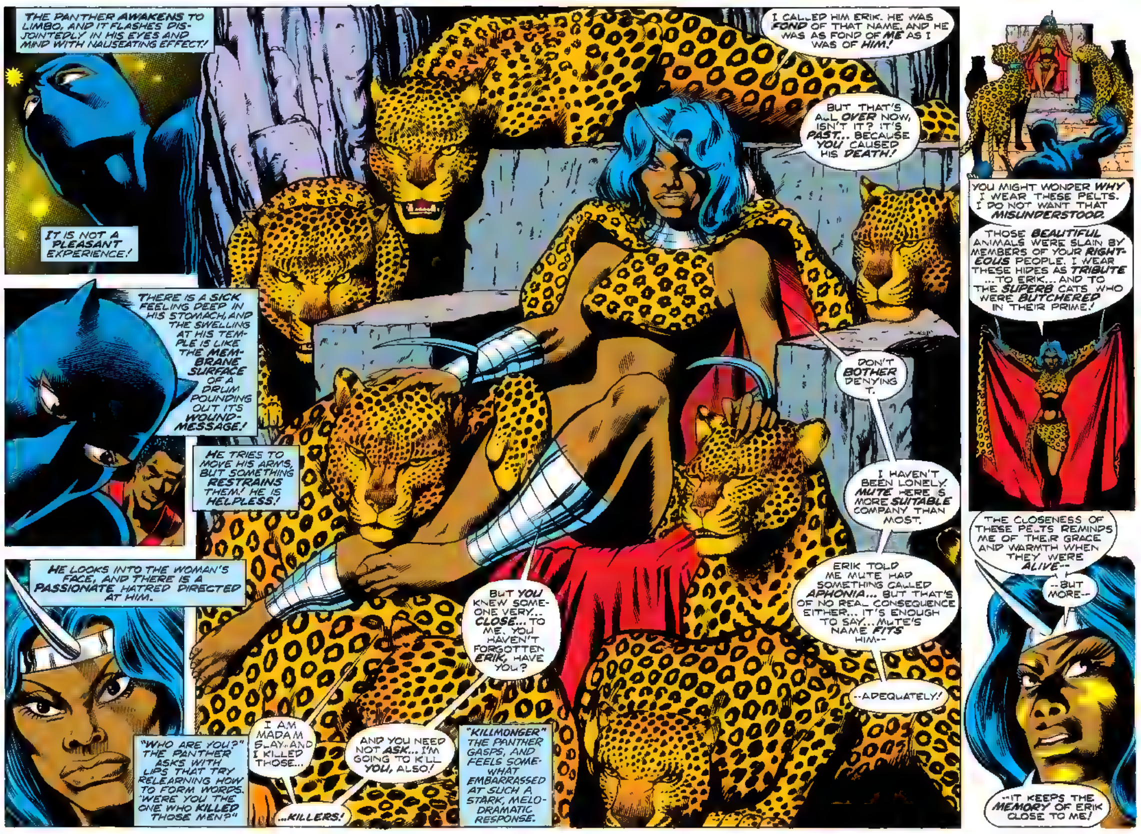
THE AMBER PAGODA IS SURROUNDED BY SOFT SOUNDS. WHISPERING LEAVES SPEAKING THE VOICE OF THE WIND... RIVER CURRENTS FLIRTING WITH THE SUN.
W'KABI AND CHANDRA'S CHILDREN STAND AT THE RIVER'S EDGE, BUT LOOK TOWARD THE DOORWAY WHERE THEIR PARENTS STAND AS SEPARATE SILHOUETTES THEY HOPE WILL JOIN.
THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE GESTURES AND POSTURES OF DEPRESSION AND SORROW--
--BUT THEY DO KNOW SOMETHING IS... WRONG!
THEY SAY THIS ISN'T THE COWARDLY WAY OUT... ENDING IT ALL FACE TO FACE--
--BUT I THINK IT'D HAVE BEEN EASIER ON BOTH OF US IF WE'D KEPT IT LESS PERSONAL.
THAT'S WHAT WE BECAME, CHANDRA--
--LESS PERSONAL.
THERE IS A WORD I SHOULD HAVE LEARNED BEFORE... AFFECTION... I NEVER KNEW WHAT IT MEANT TO ME UNTIL MY NEED FOR IT WAS SO GREAT...
...AND I COULD NO LONGER GIVE IT. YES, I KNOW. I ONCE THOUGHT AFFECTION IMPORTANT... IT SEEMS LESS SO NOW.
WE CHANGE POSITIONS.
COME, CHILDREN.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AWAY. NOT FAR ENOUGH TO ESCAPE THE GUILT THAT HOUNDS ME. I CAN'T GO THAT FAR.
ARGUMENTS FLARE IN W'KABI'S MIND: LIVING WITH GUILT DOES NOT ATONE FOR THE ACTS THAT BOTHER YOU... IT MERELY RUINS YOUR LIFE.
I LIVE WITH GUILT, EVERY ACTION. YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME... BUT I'M TIRED OF IT.
HE STARTS TO RAISE HIS LEFT ARM TOWARD HER RETREATING FIGURE AND STOPS, REALIZING THAT IT IS A MECHANICAL ARM THAT HE LIFTS, A DEAD LIMB THAT CANNOT FEEL THE PAIN THE REST OF HIM FEELS.
AND THE RIVER SPEAKS SOFTLY OF LONELY NIGHTS!

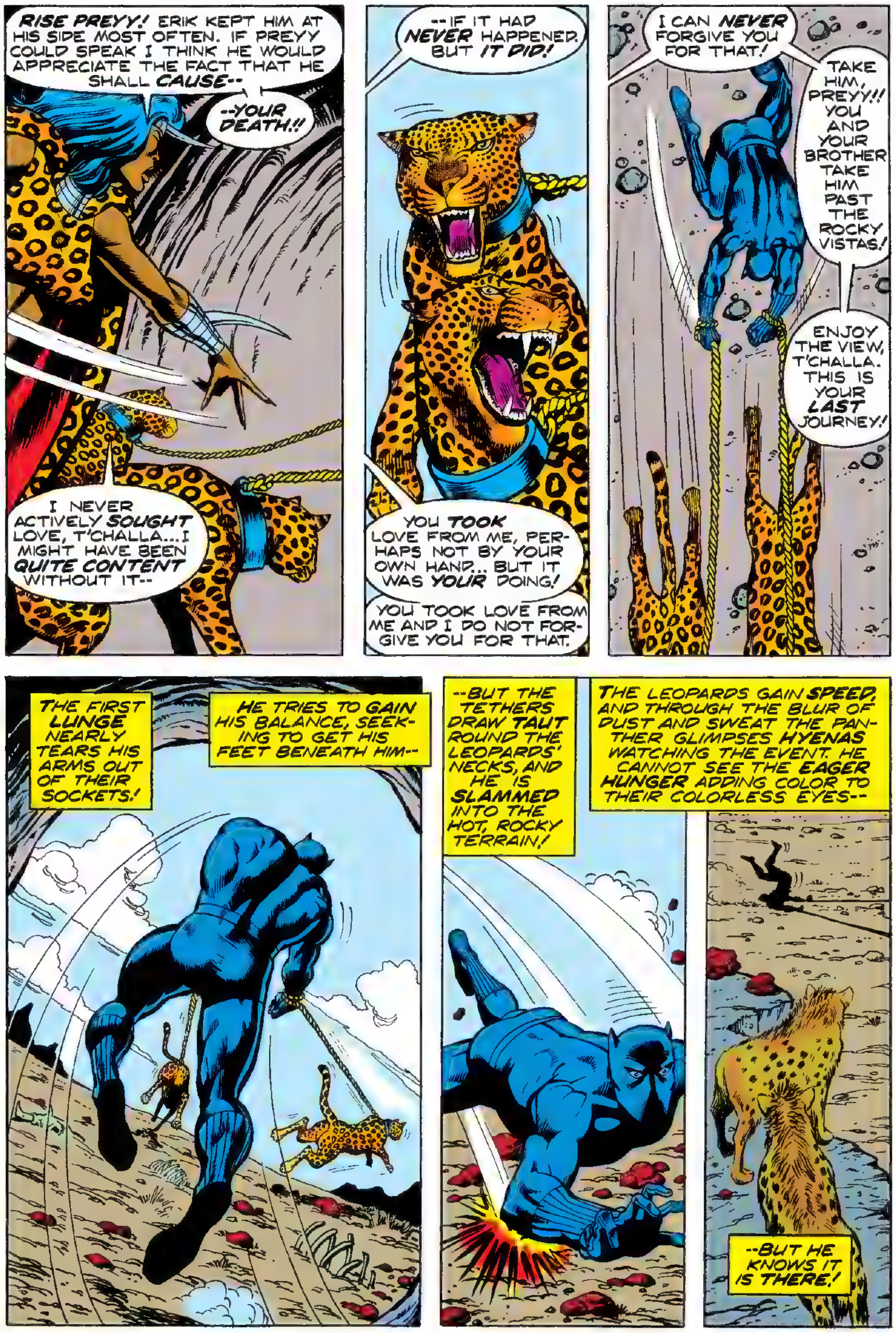
IT IS THE MORNING AFTER THE LONELY NIGHT. A SLAUGHTER WILL HAPPEN THIS MORNING... BRUTAL... AND RUTHLESS... AND CALCULATED SLAUGHTER! AT THE MOMENT, THE TWO MEN WHO STALK THE SNARLING LEOPARD THINK THEY WILL COMMIT THE KILL.
THEY WILL SPEAR THE ANIMAL HIDE AT THE THROAT, CAREFUL NOT TO RUIN THE PELT...
...AND THEN THEY WILL TAKE TURNS BASHING IN ITS SKULL UNTIL IT CEASES TO FIGHT!
THEY ARE ALONE WITH THE MORNING AND THEIR BRUTALITY, AND SECURE IN THAT KNOWLEDGE UNTIL A FOREIGN SOUND RIPS AWAY THEIR SECURITY!
AND THEY LOOK UPON THE FACES OF THEIR EXECUTIONERS!
THERE WILL BE A SLAUGHTER THIS MORNING--
--BUT THEY... WILL BE THE VICTIMS!


THE SECOND NIGHT PASSES; A BLACK ETERNITY OF RESTLESS SLEEP AND WAKING TO EMPTY STRETCHES OF BED IN A VAST ROOM FILLED WITH THE SOUND OF HIS LONE BREATHING. W'KABI NEARLY CALLS CHANDRA'S NAME AND REALIZES THAT IT IS THE PANTHER'S VOICE HE HEARS.
WOODLAND SOMBRE IS TREACHEROUSLY PASTEL. THE SHADOWS ARE HIDDEN!
WE'RE ALMOST AT THE SPOT, W'KABI, WHERE THE SHEPHERD SAYS HE SAW HIS MYSTERIOUS CORPSES.
I SEE I DID NOT NEED TO ADVISE YOU THAT A CAUTIOUS APPROACH WOULD BE BEST, MY FRIEND.
THE MAN MUST EXAGGERATE HIS FINDINGS, MY CHIEFTAIN. SINCE KILLMONGER'S DEATH, WAKANDA HAS HAD LITTLE OF THE CRUELLY PLANNED SLAYINGS AT WHICH HE WAS A MASTER!
LET US HOPE... IT IS NOT SOMEONE COPYING... HIS STYLE!
YOU HAVE BEEN SILENT FOR LONG STRETCHES ON OUR JOURNEY. IS IT THIS THAT TROUBLES YOU?
CHANDRA HAS LEFT ME ...TO SEEK HER ...I THINK THE WORD SHE USES IS... IDENTITY. I DID NOT WISH TO BORE YOU WITH IT, MY CHIEFTAIN.
IT WOULD NOT BORE ME, MY FRIEND. I SENSED YOUR AGONY.
I GO OVER IT AND OVER IT... I WANT THERE TO BE SOME GOOD GUYS AND BAD GUYS... BUT THERE ARE NONE.
THE CHANGES IN MY LIFE... I AM ASHAMED TO ADMIT ...SCARE ME! I WAS WEAK AND LEANED ON CHANDRA. NOW I DEPEND ON AN ARM THAT IS NOT PART OF MY FLESH--
--AN ALIEN UNFEELING THING THAT RESPONDS TO MY THOUGHTS IN A MANNER I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. IT FILLS ME WITH HORROR!
IT WAS A DIFFICULT DECISION, BUT YOU HAD LOST YOUR REAL ARM. IT COULD NOT BE MENDED.
AND COUPLES SHARE DEPENDENCY. WHEN CHANDRA'S WORLD BECAME LESS DEPENDENT ON YOU... YOURS WAS STILL DEPENDENT ON HERS. IT IS A PAINFUL CHANGE WHEN THE TWO PEOPLE HAVE HAD A CLOSE HISTORY.
THEY WALK OUT INTO THE CLEARING AND STOP! THEIR DISCUSSION OF LIFE IMPALED BY THE REALITY OF DEATH!
A PASTEL DEATH SCENE WITH UNKEMPT SCAVENGERS HUNGRILY EYEING THE REMAINS.
THE HYENAS JUMP HALF-HEARTEDLY FOR PIECES OF AN AFTERNOON MEAL!

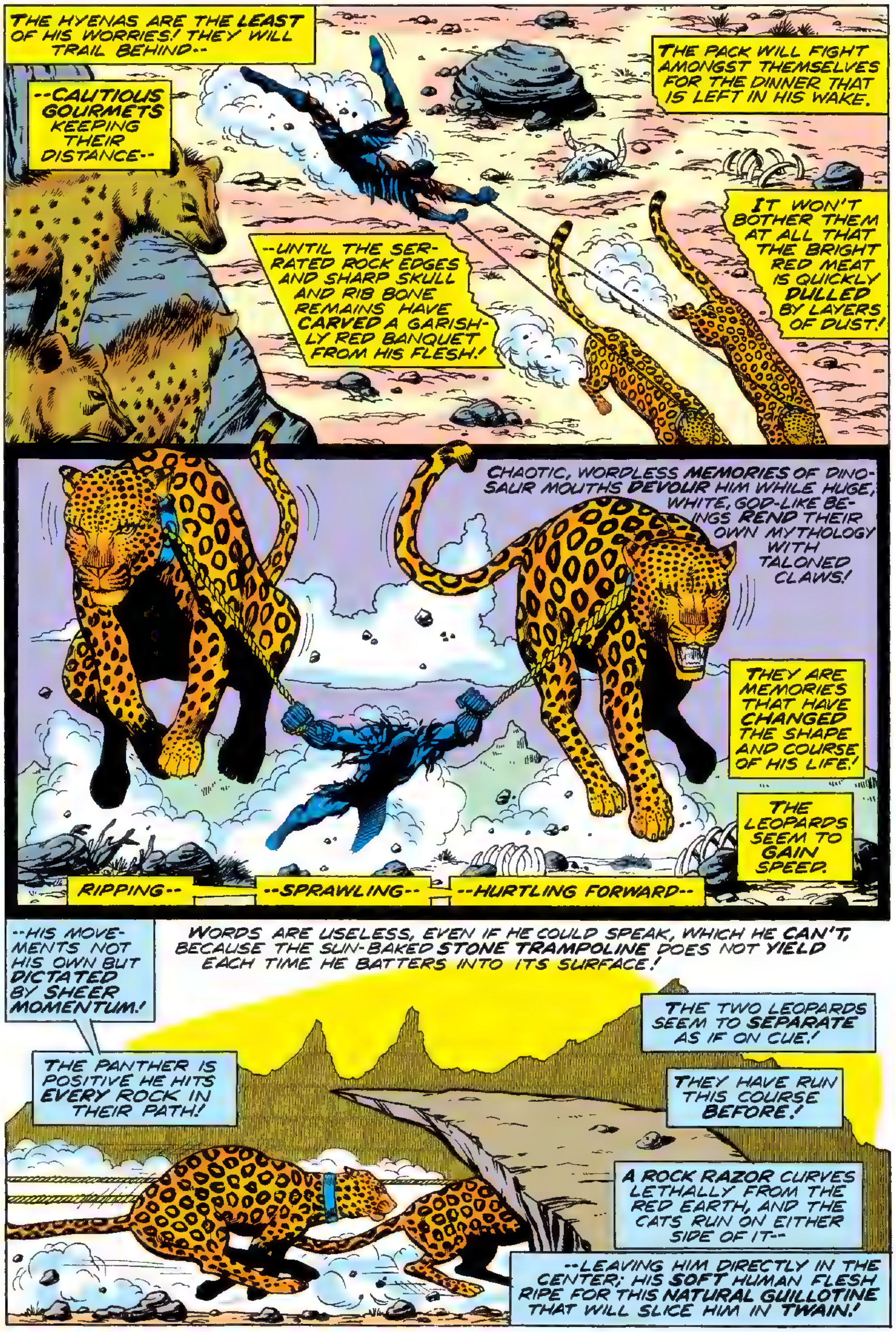

W'KABI'S REAL HAND SEPARATES THE OTHER FROM ITS WRIST. THE HORROR IS FELT ONLY IN W'KABI'S MIND.
OUR SHEPHERD DID NOT EXAGGERATE, W'KABI. SCATTER THE HYENAS WHILE I RELEASE THE BODIES.
THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON AND THE METALLIC ARM PULSATES UP INTO HIS CHEST WHERE THE ENERGY VIBRATES: A FLESH TUNING FORK! THE MIND REBELS AGAINST THE CONCEPT!
THAT SHOULD KEEP THEM AWAY. HYENAS ARE NOT AS SURE ABOUT A PREY THAT DOES NOT REMAIN STILL.
THEY'VE BEEN DEAD MORE THAN A DAY. THE SUN HAS NOT BEEN KIND TO THEM.
I HAD HOPED SUCH VIOLENCE WOULD ONLY BE DISTURBING MEMORIES.
INSTEAD, ITS SPECTER STALKS US ANEW.
THERE ARE MANY TRACKS HERE, MY CHIEFTAIN.
TWO SETS OF HUMAN PRINTS SURROUNDED BY THE TRACKS OF MANY CATS.
LEOPARDS, IT WOULD APPEAR.
AN IMPOSSIBLY HUGE HAND REACHES OUT FOR HIM, THRUST FROM THE PASTEL FOLIAGE--
--AND IMPOSSIBLY HUGE FINGERS DIG INTO THE SOFT NECK FLESH.
THE GRIP TIGHTENS AS THE IMPOSSIBLY HUGE FINGERS SEEK THE NARROW SKULL LINE BENEATH THE EAR LOBES.
THE PASTELS GO DARK!

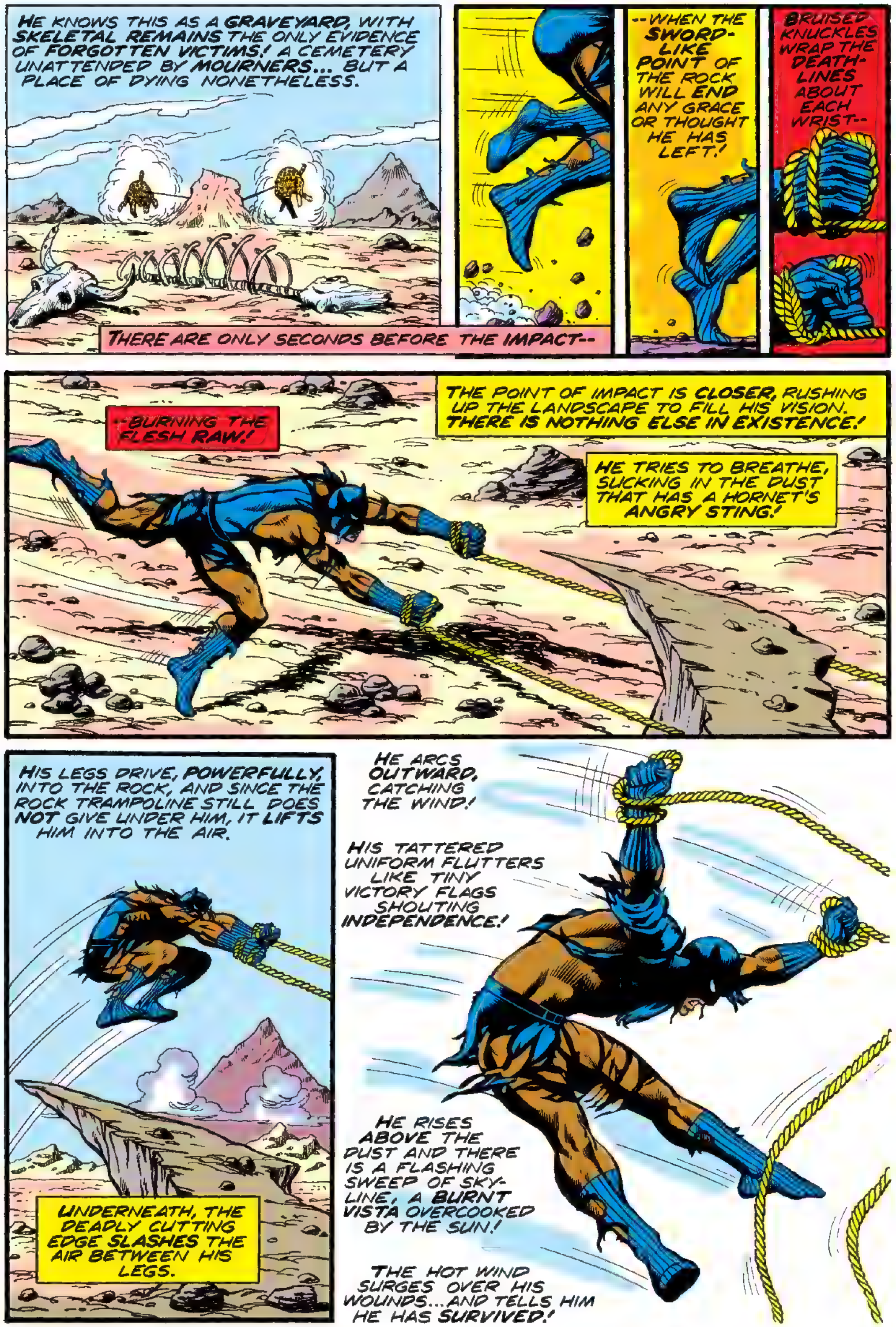
PUT HIM DOWN--
--AND PUT HIM DOWN... NOW!
THE GIANT DOES NOT REPLY, BUT HE RELEASES W'KABI IN AN ALMOST GENTLE FASHION.
THERE IS NOTHING GENTLE ABOUT HIM WHEN HE TURNS BACK TO FACE THE PANTHER.
NOTHING GENTLE AT ALL! THERE IS NOTHING GENTLE, EITHER, ABOUT THE PANTHER'S ATTACK!
SILENTLY, THE GIANT FALLS. HE DOES NOT CRY IN OUTRAGE. HE DOES NOT HURL VINDICTIVE THREATS. HIS FACE ACCEPTS THE ACT ALMOST PASSIVELY.
THERE ARE QUESTIONS THAT YOU SHALL ANSWER, SILENT ONE.
WE CAN END THIS SENSELESS CONFLICT NOW AND SAVE EACH OTHER FROM SUFFERING A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN...
THE PANTHER SEES THE GIANT RISING, CATCHES THE SWEEPING ARC OF THE HANDS WHICH ARE CLASPED ABOUT THE BOULDER!
...OR WE CAN-- UUHHH!
SUCKER-ED! AND HE FELL FOR IT!
THE PASTEL SETTING BECOMES QUIET. ONLY THE DISTANT SNARLS OF UNEASY LEOPARDS CARRY ON THE HUMID AIR.
THE GIANT DOES NOT SPEAK ONE WORD OF TRIUMPH!


THE PANTHER AWAKENS TO LIMBO, AND IT FLASHES DISJOINTEDLY IN HIS EYES AND MIND WITH NAUSEATING EFFECT!
IT IS NOT A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE!
THERE IS A SICK FEELING DEEP IN HIS STOMACH, AND THE SWELLING AT HIS TEMPLE IS LIKE THE MEMBRANE SURFACE OF A DRUM POUNDING OUT ITS WOUND-MESSAGE!
HE TRIES TO MOVE HIS ARMS, BUT SOMETHING RESTRAINS THEM! HE IS HELPLESS!
HE LOOKS INTO THE WOMAN'S FACE, AND THERE IS A PASSIONATE HATRED DIRECTED AT HIM.
"WHO ARE YOU?" THE PANTHER ASKS WITH LIPS THAT TRY RELEARNING HOW TO FORM WORDS. "WERE YOU THE ONE WHO KILLED THOSE MEN?"
I AM MADAM SLAY--AND I KILLED THOSE...
...KILLERS!
AND YOU NEED NOT ASK... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, ALSO!
"KILLMONGER" THE PANTHER GASPS, AND FEELS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED AT SUCH A STARK, MELODRAMATIC RESPONSE.
BUT YOU KNEW SOMEONE VERY... CLOSE... TO ME. YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ERIK, HAVE YOU?
I CALLED HIM ERIK. HE WAS FOND OF THAT NAME. AND HE WAS AS FOND OF ME AS I WAS OF HIM!
BUT THAT'S ALL OVER NOW, ISN'T IT? IT'S PAST... BECAUSE YOU CAUSED HIS DEATH!
DON'T BOTHER DENYING IT.
I HAVEN'T BEEN LONELY. MUTE HERE IS MORE SUITABLE COMPANY THAN MOST.
ERIK TOLD ME MUTE HAD SOMETHING CALLED APHONIA... BUT THAT'S OF NO REAL CONSEQUENCE EITHER... IT'S ENOUGH TO SAY... MUTE'S NAME FITS HIM--
--ADEQUATELY!
YOU MIGHT WONDER WHY I WEAR THESE PELTS. I DO NOT WANT THAT MISUNDERSTOOD.
THOSE BEAUTIFUL ANIMALS WERE SLAIN BY MEMBERS OF YOUR RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE. I WEAR THESE HIDES AS TRIBUTE ...TO ERIK... AND TO THE SUPERB CATS WHO WERE BUTCHERED IN THEIR PRIME!
THE CLOSENESS OF THESE PELTS REMINDS ME OF THEIR GRACE AND WARMTH WHEN THEY WERE ALIVE--
--BUT MORE--
--IT KEEPS THE MEMORY OF ERIK CLOSE TO ME!

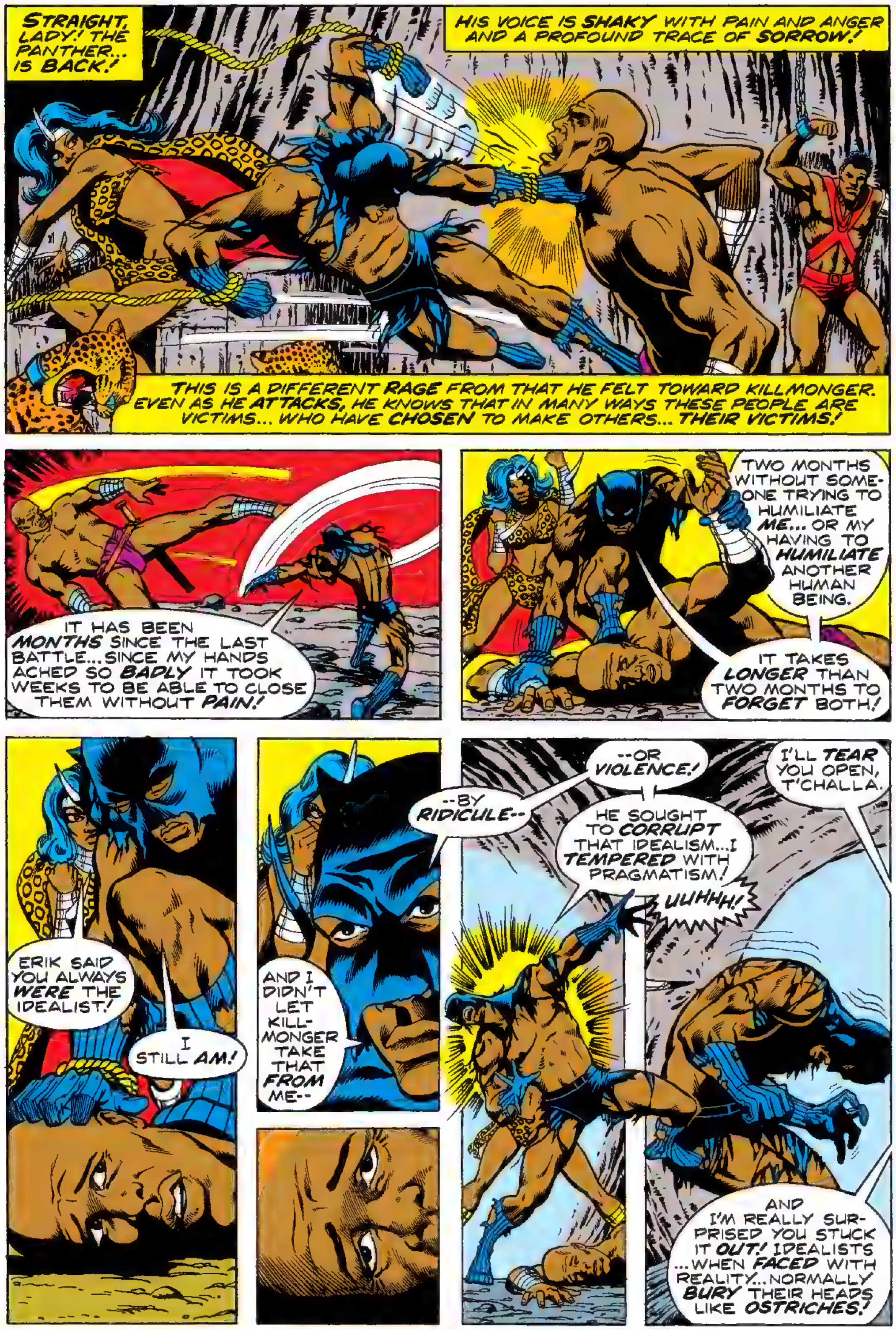


RISE PREYY! ERIK KEPT HIM AT HIS SIDE MOST OFTEN. IF PREYY COULD SPEAK I THINK HE WOULD APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT HE SHALL CAUSE--
--YOUR DEATH!!
I NEVER ACTIVELY SOUGHT LOVE, T'CHALLA...I MIGHT HAVE BEEN QUITE CONTENT WITHOUT IT--
--IF IT HAD NEVER HAPPENED. BUT IT DID!
YOU TOOK LOVE FROM ME, PERHAPS NOT BY YOUR OWN HAND... BUT IT WAS YOUR DOING!
YOU TOOK LOVE FROM ME AND I DO NOT FORGIVE YOU FOR THAT.
I CAN NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THAT!
TAKE HIM, PREYY!! YOU AND YOUR BROTHER TAKE HIM PAST THE ROCKY VISTAS!
ENJOY THE VIEW, T'CHALLA. THIS IS YOUR LAST JOURNEY!
THE FIRST LUNGE NEARLY TEARS HIS ARMS OUT OF THEIR SOCKETS!
HE TRIES TO GAIN HIS BALANCE, SEEKING TO GET HIS FEET BENEATH HIM--
--BUT THE TETHERS DRAW TAUT ROUND THE LEOPARDS' NECKS, AND HE IS SLAMMED INTO THE HOT, ROCKY TERRAIN!
THE LEOPARDS GAIN SPEED, AND THROUGH THE BLUR OF DUST AND SWEAT THE PANTHER GLIMPSES HYENAS WATCHING THE EVENT. HE CANNOT SEE THE EAGER HUNGER ADDING COLOR TO THEIR COLORLESS EYES--
--BUT HE KNOWS IT IS THERE!


THE HYENAS ARE THE LEAST OF HIS WORRIES! THEY WILL TRAIL BEHIND--
--CAUTIOUS GOURMETS KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE--
THE PACK WILL FIGHT AMONGST THEMSELVES FOR THE DINNER THAT IS LEFT IN HIS WAKE.
--UNTIL THE SERRATED ROCK EDGES AND SHARP SKULL AND RIB BONE REMAINS HAVE CARVED A GARISHLY RED BANQUET FROM HIS FLESH!
IT WON'T BOTHER THEM AT ALL THAT THE BRIGHT RED MEAT IS QUICKLY DULLED BY LAYERS OF DUST!
CHAOTIC, WORDLESS MEMORIES OF DINOSAUR MOUTHS DEVOUR HIM WHILE HUGE, WHITE, GOD-LIKE BEINGS REND THEIR OWN MYTHOLOGY WITH TALONED CLAWS!
THEY ARE MEMORIES THAT HAVE CHANGED THE SHAPE AND COURSE OF HIS LIFE!
THE LEOPARDS SEEM TO GAIN SPEED.
RIPPING--
--SPRAWLING--
--HURTLING FORWARD--
--HIS MOVEMENTS NOT HIS OWN BUT DICTATED BY SHEER MOMENTUM!
WORDS ARE USELESS, EVEN IF HE COULD SPEAK, WHICH HE CAN'T, BECAUSE THE SUN-BAKED STONE TRAMPOLINE DOES NOT YIELD EACH TIME HE BATTERS INTO ITS SURFACE!
THE PANTHER IS POSITIVE HE HITS EVERY ROCK IN THEIR PATH!
THE TWO LEOPARDS SEEM TO SEPARATE AS IF ON CUE!
THEY HAVE RUN THIS COURSE BEFORE!
A ROCK RAZOR CURVES LETHALLY FROM THE RED EARTH, AND THE CATS RUN ON EITHER SIDE OF IT--
--LEAVING HIM DIRECTLY IN THE CENTER; HIS SOFT HUMAN FLESH RIPE FOR THIS NATURAL GUILLOTINE THAT WILL SLICE HIM IN TWAIN!


HE KNOWS THIS AS A GRAVEYARD, WITH SKELETAL REMAINS THE ONLY EVIDENCE OF FORGOTTEN VICTIMS! A CEMETERY UNATTENDED BY MOURNERS... BUT A PLACE OF DYING NONETHELESS.
THERE ARE ONLY SECONDS BEFORE THE IMPACT--
--WHEN THE SWORD-LIKE POINT OF THE ROCK WILL END ANY GRACE OR THOUGHT HE HAS LEFT.!
BRUISED KNUCKLES WRAP THE DEATH-LINES ABOUT EACH WRIST--
--BURNING THE FLESH RAW!
THE POINT OF IMPACT IS CLOSER, RUSHING UP THE LANDSCAPE TO FILL HIS VISION. THERE IS NOTHING ELSE IN EXISTENCE!
HE TRIES TO BREATHE, SUCKING IN THE DUST THAT HAS A HORNET'S ANGRY STING!
HIS LEGS DRIVE, POWERFULLY, INTO THE ROCK, AND SINCE THE ROCK TRAMPOLINE STILL DOES NOT GIVE UNDER HIM, IT LIFTS HIM INTO THE AIR.
UNDERNEATH, THE DEADLY CUTTING EDGE SLASHES THE AIR BETWEEN HIS LEGS.
HE ARCS OUTWARD, CATCHING THE WIND!
HIS TATTERED UNIFORM FLUTTERS LIKE TINY VICTORY FLAGS SHOUTING INDEPENDENCE!
HE RISES ABOVE THE DUST AND THERE IS A FLASHING SWEEP OF SKY-LINE, A BURNT VISTA OVERCOOKED BY THE SUN!
THE HOT WIND SURGES OVER HIS WOUNDS...AND TELLS HIM HE HAS SURVIVED!

THE NEXT SECONDS ARE RISKY! ONE MIS-CALCULATION... JUST ONE!... AND HE WILL CRASH BACK INTO THE DUST AND ROCK. THE HYENAS ARE AN UNSEEN AUDIENCE; THEIR LAUGHTER MOCKS HIS AUDACIOUS ATTEMPT!
HE LANDS ON THE LEOPARDS' BACKS, AND THIS SURFACE DOES GIVE BENEATH HIS BOOTS. MUSCLES RIPPLE FLUIDLY THREATENING TO DASH HIM UNDER THEIR TREAD!
HE SWAYS UNCERTAINLY. EARTH AND SKY TUG AT HIM. HE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO SECURE HIS FOOTING!
IN ONE SECOND, THE SITUATION CHANGES. HIS FOOTING IS A CERTAINTY!
HE IS ASTRIDE THE SNARLING BEASTS, CROUCHING DEFIANTLY--
--AND THEY HEAD, INSTINCTIVELY, BACK TOWARD THE LAIR FROM WHICH HIS FUNERAL PROCESSION BEGAN!
GREY AND BLACK ARE ALIEN HUES IN THIS CEMETERY. SCULPTURED LAWNS AND DECORATIVE MARKERS ARE MISSING, BUT IT IS STILL A LAND FERTILIZED BY ROTTING CORPSES!
ONE CORPSE HAS JUST RETURNED...DEFIANTLY!
MADAM SLAY IS LESS THAN PLEASED!
MUTE!! BE CAREFUL, MUTE! HE'S COME BACK!


STRAIGHT, LADY! THE PANTHER... IS BACK!
HIS VOICE IS SHAKY WITH PAIN AND ANGER AND A PROFOUND TRACE OF SORROW!
THIS IS A DIFFERENT RAGE FROM THAT HE FELT TOWARD KILLMONGER. EVEN AS HE ATTACKS, HE KNOWS THAT IN MANY WAYS THESE PEOPLE ARE VICTIMS... WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO MAKE OTHERS... THEIR VICTIMS!
IT HAS BEEN MONTHS SINCE THE LAST BATTLE...SINCE MY HANDS ACHED SO BADLY IT TOOK WEEKS TO BE ABLE TO CLOSE THEM WITHOUT PAIN!
TWO MONTHS WITHOUT SOME-ONE TRYING TO HUMILIATE ME... OR MY HAVING TO HUMILIATE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.
IT TAKES LONGER THAN TWO MONTHS TO FORGET BOTH!
ERIK SAID YOU ALWAYS WERE THE IDEALIST!
I STILL AM!
AND I DIDN'T LET KILL-MONGER TAKE THAT FROM ME--
--BY RIDICULE--
--OR VIOLENCE!
HE SOUGHT TO CORRUPT THAT IDEALISM...I TEMPERED WITH PRAGMATISM!
UUHHH!
I'LL TEAR YOU OPEN, T'CHALLA.
AND I'M REALLY SUR-PRISED YOU STUCK IT OUT! IDEALISTS ...WHEN FACED WITH REALITY...NORMALLY BURY THEIR HEADS LIKE OSTRICHES!

BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER YOU'LL BE BURIED, T'CHALLA--
--AND THE REST OF YOUR BODY WILL JOIN YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND!
MADAM SLAY HEARS THE BLAST AND TURNS, UNCOMPREHENDINGLY. SHE LOOKS INTO W'KABI'S FACE AND SEES THE SAME LOOK OF INCOMPREHENSION.
ILOGUE
HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THIS MONSTROUS LIMB WORKS, BUT HE DOES UNDERSTAND ITS POWER!
ONCE, W'KABI WOULD HAVE AIMED TO KILL--
--BUT THOSE DAYS HAVE PASSED. MADAM SLAY TOPPLES INTO HER THRONE WITH A SICKENING SOUND THAT REMINDS HIM OF THE NIGHT VENOMM SLASHED OPEN HIS HEAD WITH A GUN BARREL.
IT IS A SOUND THAT LIVES WITH YOU FOREVER ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT.
W'KABI LOOKS AT THE SMOULDERING LENGTH OF ARM AS IF IT IS SOMETHING DANGEROUS THAT WILL TURN ON HIM.
EPILOGUE
HE DOES NOT SEE THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES NARROW AS THEY COMPREHEND THAT THERE IS MORE TRAGEDY HERE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, AND THAT ALL OF THEM ARE HURT AND BLEEDING AND SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER BY THAT PAIN.
EPILOG
PICK HER UP, MUTE! IT IS TIME TO LEAVE THIS PLACE.
IT IS OVER, MY CHIEFTAIN. FINALLY OVER.
W'KABI... SOMETIMES I THINK--
--IT WILL NEVER BE OVER!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

PANTHER'S RAGE SYMPOSIUM — a reader analysis of the Panther's epic *encounter and brutal battle with Eric Killmonger.*

It's all over.

Two years and 209 pages later (when you include this special epilogue issue), the concept that began back in 1973 is finished. Oh, that concept changed subtly with the passage of time, as ideas reached their moment to become comic book reality: and the initial thrust expanded with each new chapter, sometimes adding more sagas to the entire "Panther's Rage" than had been originally planned: but even with the changes and expansion, it *has* ended.

During that time many of you have taken the time to write us, in praise or condemnation (though, thankfully, mostly the former) and since we had to forego the pleasure of a letters page last ish due to the extra page of story in the FINAL confrontation between T'Challa and Killmonger, we thought we'd make that up to you by presenting a special double page attraction that showcases your reaction.

Take it away, People.

Dear Marvel in general,

A story written by Don shouts for attention. You can't skim through it, every word demands to be read and savoured, every panel to be scrutinized and appreciated. Rush a McGregor book and you lose the story instantly, it doesn't make sense and you feel you've missed something—you have! Don is single-handedly pioneering a movement that will place the writer on a par with the artist as the dominant force in creating a comic book. For too long have the writers supplied the foundations on which the artists build their ivory towers of glory.

Which reader who thrilled at T'Challa's recent battle with the crocodile didn't feel that he too was placing his hand in that reptile's mouth and sharing the revulsion that the Black Panther felt? To my mind a McGregor book is a hybrid between the pulps of yesteryear and the visually exciting comics of today.

Marvel may have invented the "humanized" super-hero, but it is Don McGregor who is honing and polishing that technique to perfection.

Never has a hero had such an introduction in his own strip as "Panther's Rage" is giving T'Challa. It joins the annals of all-time comics classics, on a level with such legendary works as the Kree-Skrull War (Avengers 89-98) and the Thanos Epic (Captain Marvel 25-33). (Try re-printing any of those, complete, in a MARVEL TREASURY EDITION!!)

Richard Burton
22 Woodhaw
Egham, Surrey
England

Well, after kind words like that, Richard, you won't get any Burton jokes from our corner. For you stateside Marvel maniacs not in the know, Richard helms a British fanzine along with another erstwhile comics enthusiast, Nick Landau, and the two of them met with Don at last year's July comic convention where they conducted an in-depth interview with the Dauntless One which will finally prove that Don's as long-winded when speaking as he is when writing and that he still doesn't know what the word "dauntless" means but is afraid to look it up. If you should like to order any copies of their splendidly produced fanzine (they also offer Spirit reprints, Modesty Blaise and Jeff Hawke newspaper comic dailies among other incisive goodies) you can do so by getting in touch with Richard at the above address.

Don, by the way, assures us that these tapes are not as controversial as the Watergate tapes, although he feels they may be just as embarrassing...the thing is, he can't remember exactly what it was he said back there in July of '74. Talk about the past finally catching up with you. Sheesh!

Dear Marvel,

For a strip to be successful (and believe me, the Panther is!), the whole team has to work together. When it comes off, the story is reminiscent of a minstrel singer come to town to weave a tale from the chaos of words and music. Well, the Panther works! and works quite nicely, thank you.

Would you like to know what it is? A little bird caught in a mire and the tears in the eyes of 'macho freak sold on muscles and myths of war.' Perhaps W'Kabi realizes that he is more of a person when he doesn't have to worry about what other men think when he feels like shedding a tear. I hope so.

Richard Whitehead
244 So. 2nd E. #9
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Dear Don, Billy and Craig,

I see you've finally worked in a scene of the Wakanda Hospital and one of W'kabi's home life. But while you've achieved this, there are so many others that you've had to slight this issue. I sometimes suspect that if Marvel were to give you 30 pages to produce your stories in, you still wouldn't be able to treat all your characters in depth as much as you would like. MARVEL TREASURY EDITIONS, I guess are big successes. It would be nice if you could get them to collect the complete "Panther's Rage" into one fat, oversized book. The art that has appeared in this comic deserve the larger size.

Brian Earl Brown
55521 Elder Road
Mishawaka, Ind. 46544

"Panther's Rage" runs somewhat long for a Treasury edition, Brian, but who knows what might happen in the future. If enough readers demand a product, there's always a chance it will happen. If so, it will give us the chance to correct the few annoying mistakes that really bother its creators (but which somehow are never spotted until the book is out on the stands and it's impossible to change.)

Also, since we've mentioned COMIC MEDIA this go round, we might as well mention that the Rex Reed of the comics industry (in caustic commentary at any rate) is our own beloved Brian Earl who has put together his own fanzine called BROWNIAN MOTION which currently fea-

tures a dissection of the role of women in comics. The article is called "Kitchen Slaves in the 25th Century" and makes at least passing mention of Monica Lynne. Pick it up, you might not agree with all of it; but, in many ways, that's what the game is all about. An exchange of ideas.

Think on it.

Dear Marvel Guys,

AN ORIGINAL BLACK PANTHER KNOCK-KNOCK JOKE!!!

Knock-knock!
Who's there?
Wakanda.
Wakanda who?
Wakanda wild side, babe!

P.S.: Your JUNGLE ACTION/BLACK PANTHER mag really knocks me out!

Tim Krenke
Milwaukee, Wisc. 53210

Such sheer staggering poetry brings a collective tear to our collective eye, Tim. You've seen through to the essence of it all and we stand in awe of your cataclysmic creation. We're just wondering what Jane Fonda would have to say about this rampant revelation on the Wild Side since she's obviously changed since the days she walked on the wild side herself. That's the movie we're talking about, gang, the movie.

Dear Don & Co.:

After reading JUNGLE ACTION #'s 13 and 14, I feel compelled to write and congratulate you on the creation of an epic, even by Marvel standards. But first, to paraphrase bashful Benjamin, "it's no-prizin' time!" On page one of #13, and again on page two of #14, you have T'Challa following a *spore.* If this were true, he would have to have extremely good eyesight, to say the least. If, however, he was following a *spoor,* he would have a much easier time. I feel that a no-prize is particularly appropriate here, considering that they were invented to show what good sports you are when your occasional boo-boos are caught.

Mere words cannot express my feelings towards "Panther's Rage." In my wildest dreams I never expected to see such an excellent portrayal of the cycle of civilization, and the raising of the questions it asks the reader to ponder. Combined with the excellence of the rest of the crew, it stands as a classic, a "Ring Trilogy" of comics.

So, until T'Challa poses on top of a Lincoln-Mercury sign, you know what!

James J. Murray
3009 W. 7th Street
Lawrence, Kans. 66044

Consider yourself no-prized, James, and we're going to get Don back on the track. (Ouch!)

By the way, that last note about T'Challa posing on top of the Lincoln-Mercury sign may not be quite as far fetched as you think at the moment, since some way out wonderment is in store for you starting with the very next issue of JUNGLE ACTION. We won't give it away yet, but the entire Black Panther mythos veers into a new direction, and it all begins next ish, eager one. So be here. You know we get lonely when we start without you.

Dear Don and Len:

It's a big step in comics technique in that you are encorporating any and all events that make up a given situation (in this case, the Panther's "continual journey back home"). It's in-depth, it's involved, it's complete. And, that it is selling, says a lot about the level at which comic readers are now capable of accepting. Five years ago this strip would never have made it, but today...it can, and is making it. This strip's success, Don, says much to me as for comics finally approaching their potential. If such an adult (if you don't mind the word), and involved strip can sell well, then comics indeed are "growing up," with the yellow brick road leading to realized potential, already begun to be traversed.

PMM Dean Mullaney
81 Delaware St.
Staten Is., N.Y. 10304

Dean, you and Ralph Macchio and Mark Gasper, among others, have been a tremendous help with your support of the direction of this magazine; and that all of you are long time Marvel enthusiasts means that there is acceptance of new approaches and directions for our field. Let's hope the current recession doesn't sound a note of recession in the many new concepts that are currently being tried in this medium.

And thanks, to all of you, especially all the faithful fans we haven't mentioned, for your support. You've made the effort worth the while, Folks. It's called communication, and we appreciate the fact that you'd take the time to touch and exchange ideas with us.

We hope it'll continue in the future. And, knowing how responsive you people are, we kinda think it will.

Dandy Don,

You are the greatest in your field. Be it Panther vs. Tyrannosaurus or White Gorilla, it is not the sequence or action that impresses me, but the prose accompanying it. And it isn't often that I read a comic and wonder...did I understand? What don't I understand? Why didn't I...

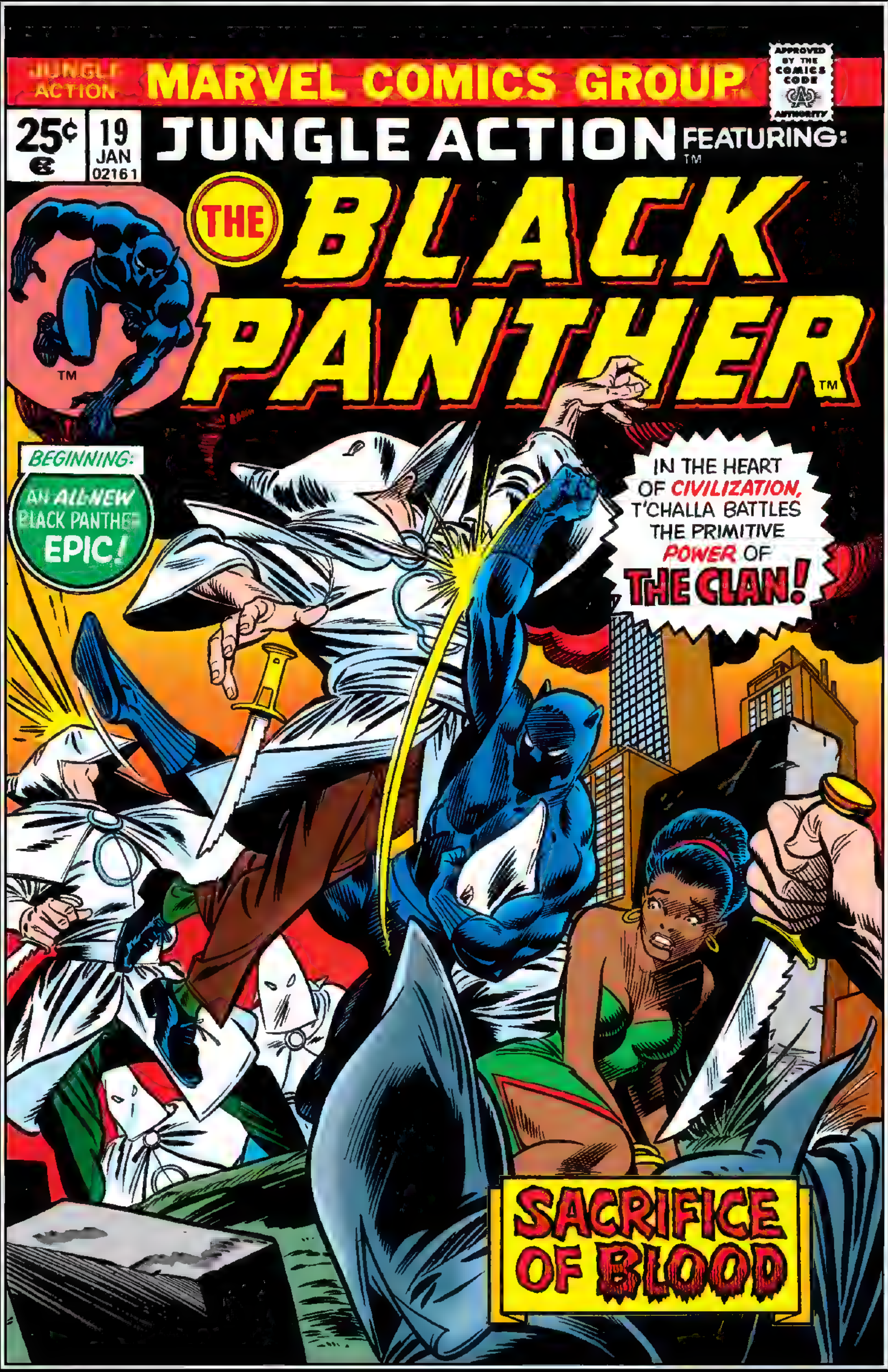
Austin Seth Camacho
19 Caroline Street
Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866

Seth, that's just what they say right here in the Marvel Bullpen, although the inflection if ofttimes less esoteric than yours.

And that about brings us to the end of this special Panther symposium. There were a lot of other letters we had to skip, including Ralph Macchio's latest incisive critique on the religious and theological implications of several of the chapters of "Panther's Rage!", but we must accept space (limitations) and hope everything we *have* included makes it into print.

Again, People...thanks! Next issue we begin a dramatic new series in the Panther: one that will be both controversial and exciting, with a new locale, new supporting cast and other unexpected surprizes.

Be kind...and hang in there!


JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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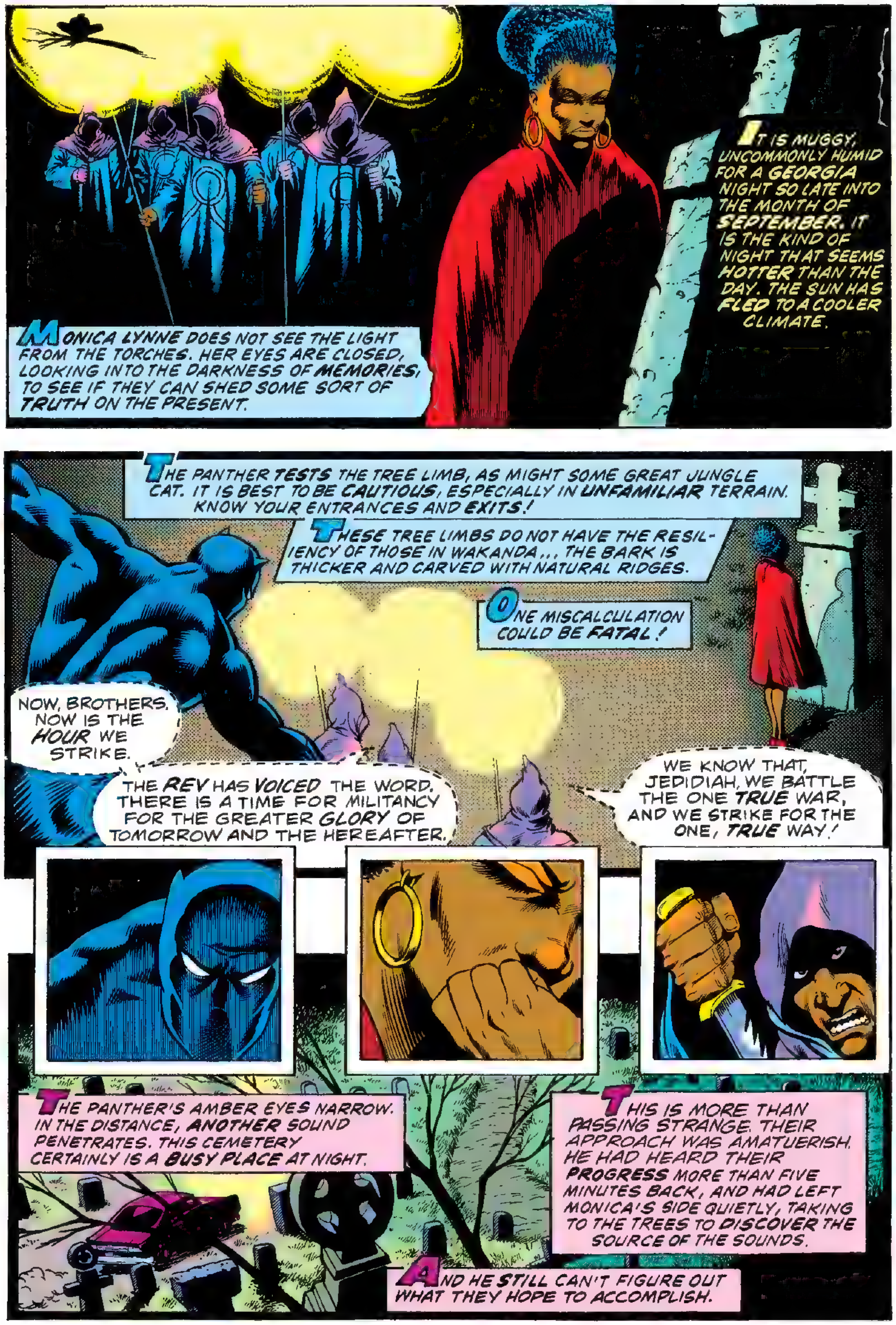
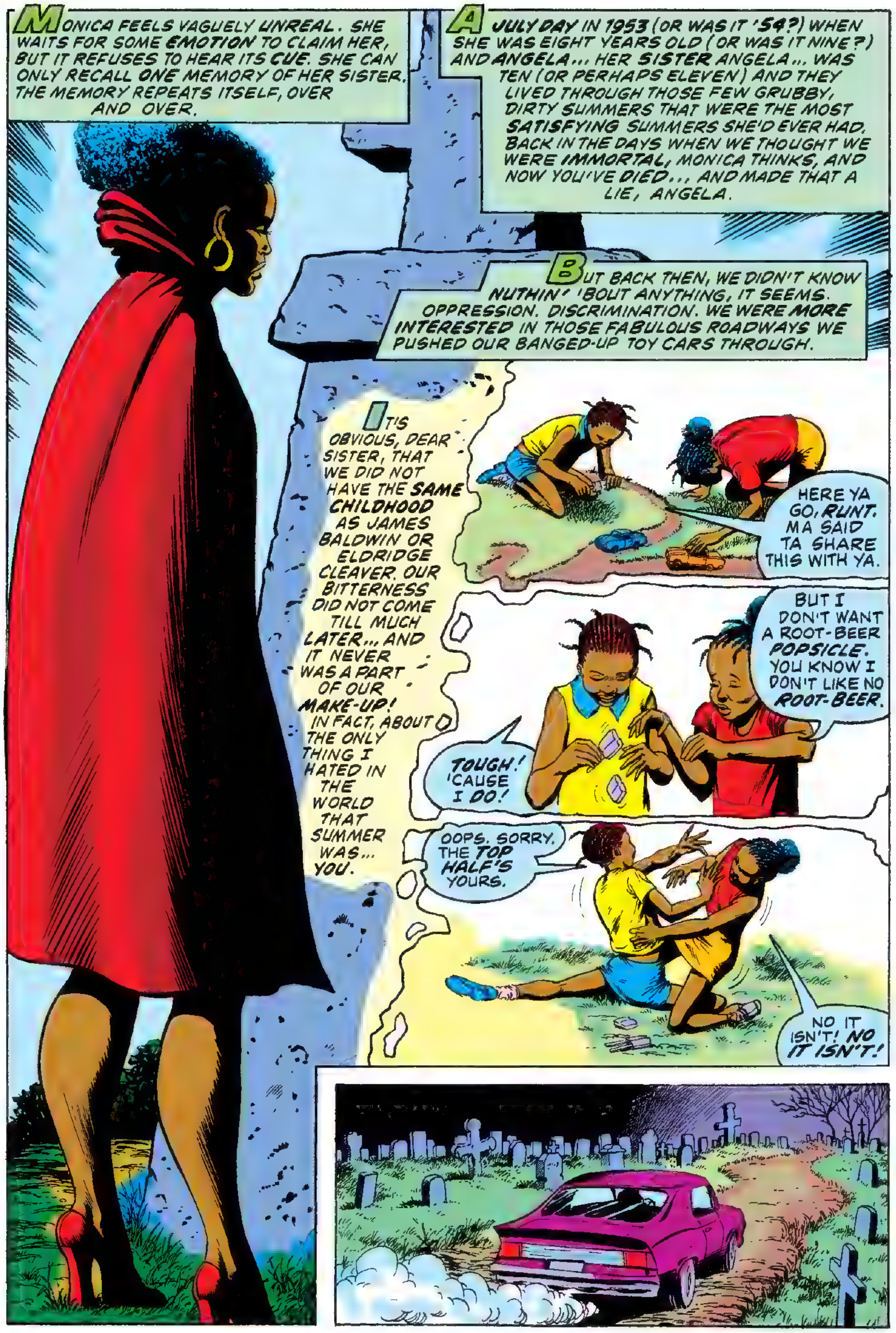
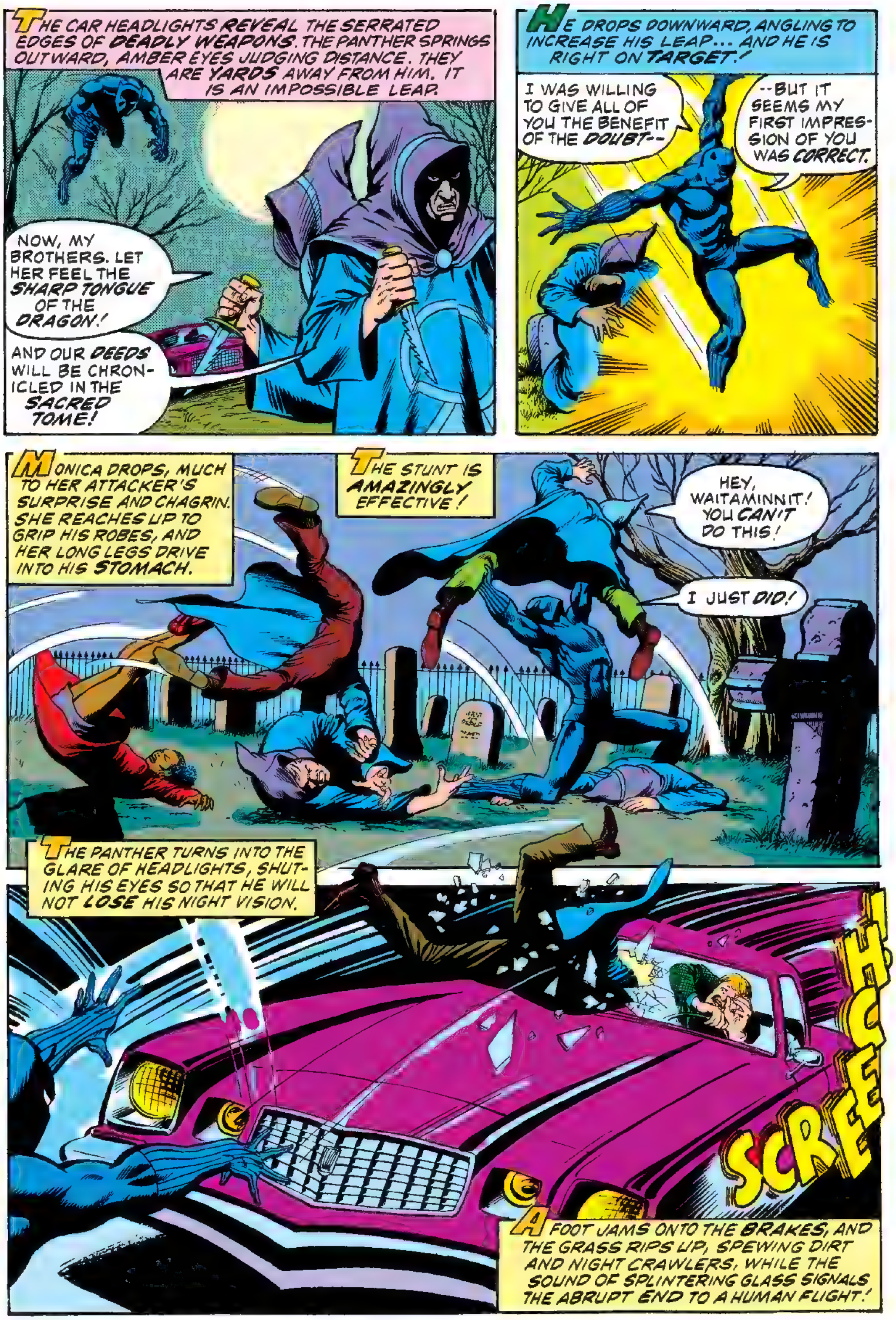
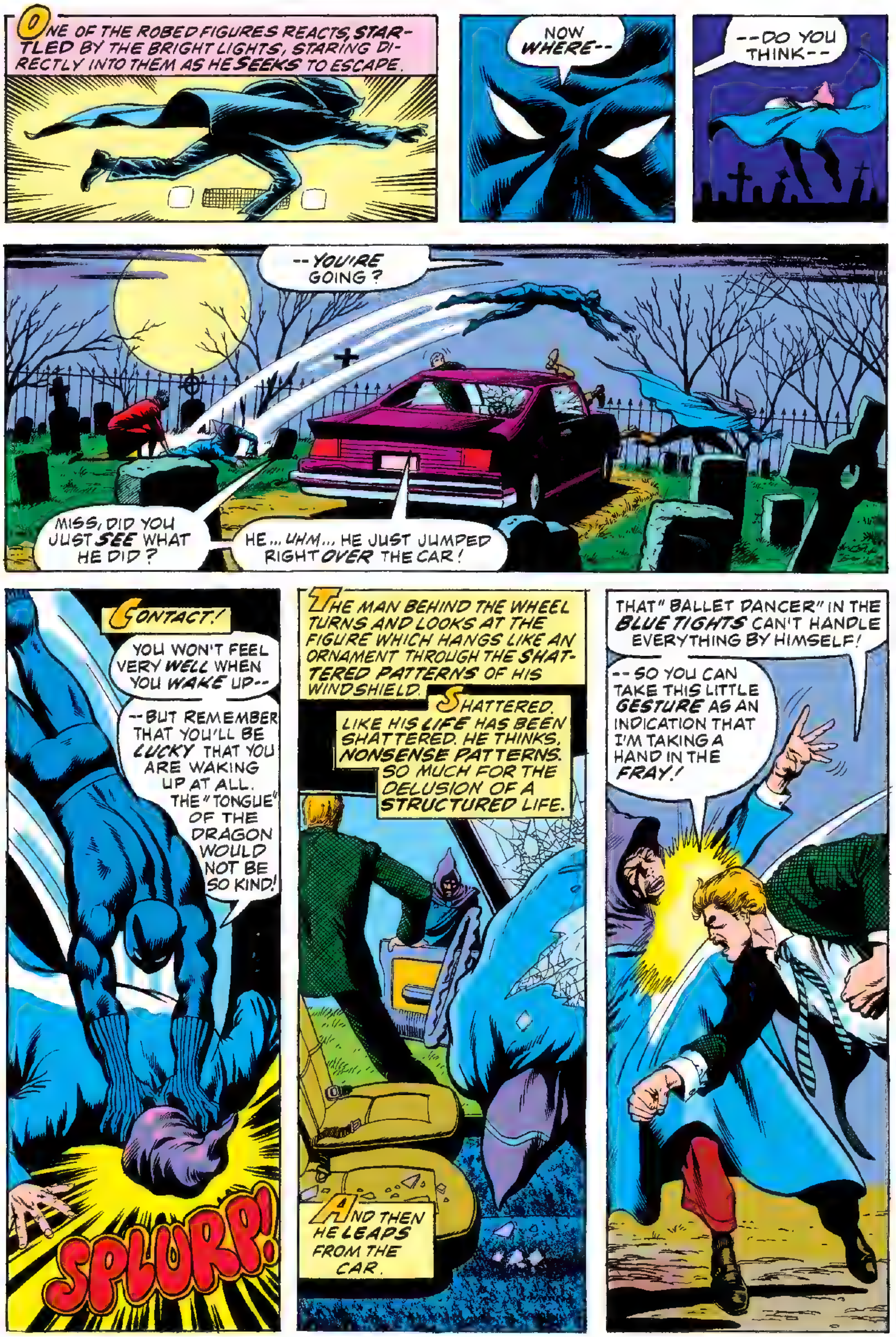
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
BEGINNING:
AN ALL-NEW BLACK PANTHER EPIC!
IN THE HEART OF CIVILIZATION, T'CHALLA BATTLES THE PRIMITIVE POWER OF THE CLAN!
SACRIFICE OF BLOOD

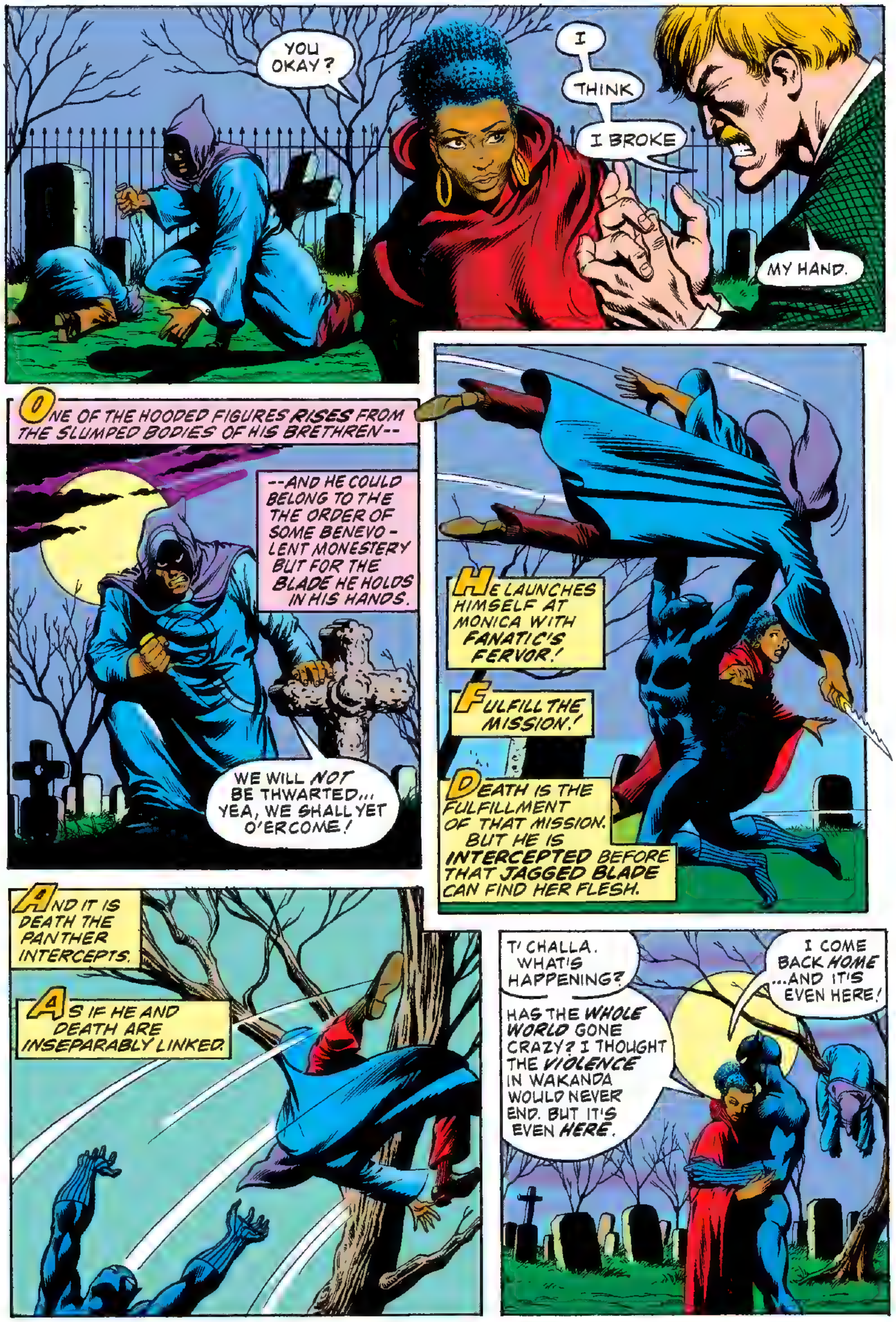
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
DON McGREGOR WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST
BOB McLEOD INKER
D. WOHL, LETTERER P. GOLDBERG, COLORIST
MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR
THE PANTHER VS. the KLAN!
BLOOD and SACRIFICES!
THE CEMETERY IS ALIVE WITH SHADOWS.
ONE OF THE SHADOWS IS LITHE AND SILENT AS IT PASSES THROUGH THE SPIDERY NETWORK OF BRANCHES. THE SHADOW HAS A SINGULAR IDENTITY... THE BLACK PANTHER.
THERE ARE OTHER SHADOWS. AND THESE MAKE SINISTER SOUNDS.
THE CEMETERY SEEMS TO WAIT FOR THE SHADOWS TO TAKE ON A SEMBLANCE OF LIFE-FLESH!
THEY DO!


MONICA LYNNE DOES NOT SEE THE LIGHT FROM THE TORCHES. HER EYES ARE CLOSED, LOOKING INTO THE DARKNESS OF MEMORIES, TO SEE IF THEY CAN SHED SOME SORT OF TRUTH ON THE PRESENT.
IT IS MUGGY, UNCOMMONLY HUMID FOR A GEORGIA NIGHT SO LATE INTO THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER. IT IS THE KIND OF NIGHT THAT SEEMS HOTTER THAN THE DAY. THE SUN HAS FLED TO A COOLER CLIMATE.
THE PANTHER TESTS THE TREE LIMB, AS MIGHT SOME GREAT JUNGLE CAT. IT IS BEST TO BE CAUTIOUS, ESPECIALLY IN UNFAMILIAR TERRAIN. KNOW YOUR ENTRANCES AND EXITS!
THESE TREE LIMBS DO NOT HAVE THE RESIL-IENCY OF THOSE IN WAKANDA... THE BARK IS THICKER AND CARVED WITH NATURAL RIDGES.
ONE MISCALCULATION COULD BE FATAL!
NOW, BROTHERS, NOW IS THE HOUR WE STRIKE.
THE REV HAS VOICED THE WORD. THERE IS A TIME FOR MILITANCY FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF TOMORROW AND THE HEREAFTER.
WE KNOW THAT, JEDIDIAH, WE BATTLE THE ONE TRUE WAR, AND WE STRIKE FOR THE ONE, TRUE WAY!
THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES NARROW. IN THE DISTANCE, ANOTHER SOUND PENETRATES. THIS CEMETERY CERTAINLY IS A BUSY PLACE AT NIGHT.
THIS IS MORE THAN PASSING STRANGE. THEIR APPROACH WAS AMATUERISH. HE HAD HEARD THEIR PROGRESS MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES BACK, AND HAD LEFT MONICA'S SIDE QUIETLY, TAKING TO THE TREES TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE SOUNDS.
AND HE STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH.

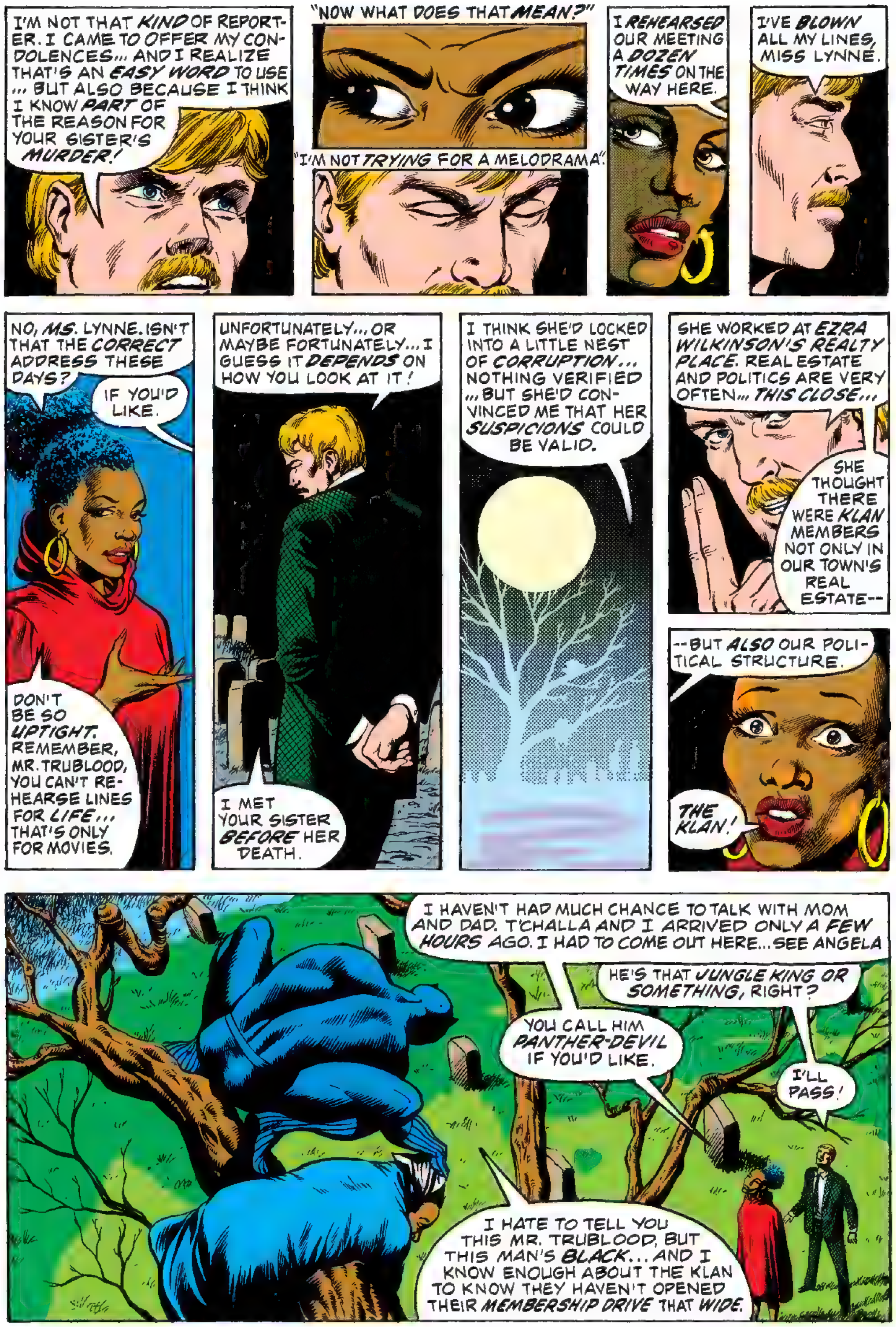

MONICA FEELS VAGUELY UNREAL. SHE WAITS FOR SOME EMOTION TO CLAIM HER, BUT IT REFUSES TO HEAR ITS CUE. SHE CAN ONLY RECALL ONE MEMORY OF HER SISTER. THE MEMORY REPEATS ITSELF, OVER AND OVER.
A JULY DAY IN 1953 (OR WAS IT '54?) WHEN SHE WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD (OR WAS IT NINE?) AND ANGELA... HER SISTER ANGELA... WAS TEN (OR PERHAPS ELEVEN) AND THEY LIVED THROUGH THOSE FEW GRUBBY, DIRTY SUMMERS THAT WERE THE MOST SATISFYING SUMMERS SHE'D EVER HAD. BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN WE THOUGHT WE WERE IMMORTAL, MONICA THINKS, AND NOW YOU'VE DIED... AND MADE THAT A LIE, ANGELA.
BUT BACK THEN, WE DIDN'T KNOW NUTHIN' 'BOUT ANYTHING, IT SEEMS. OPPRESSION. DISCRIMINATION. WE WERE MORE INTERESTED IN THOSE FABULOUS ROADWAYS WE PUSHED OUR BANGED-UP TOY CARS THROUGH.
IT'S OBVIOUS, DEAR SISTER, THAT WE DID NOT HAVE THE SAME CHILDHOOD AS JAMES BALDWIN OR ELDRIDGE CLEAVER. OUR BITTERNESS DID NOT COME TILL MUCH LATER... AND IT NEVER WAS A PART OF OUR MAKE-UP! IN FACT, ABOUT THE ONLY THING I HATED IN THE WORLD THAT SUMMER WAS... YOU.
HERE YA GO, RUNT. MA SAID TA SHARE THIS WITH YA.
BUT I DON'T WANT A ROOT-BEER POPSICLE. YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE NO ROOT-BEER.
TOUGH! 'CAUSE I DO!
OOPS. SORRY. THE TOP HALF'S YOURS.
NO IT ISN'T! NO IT ISN'T!

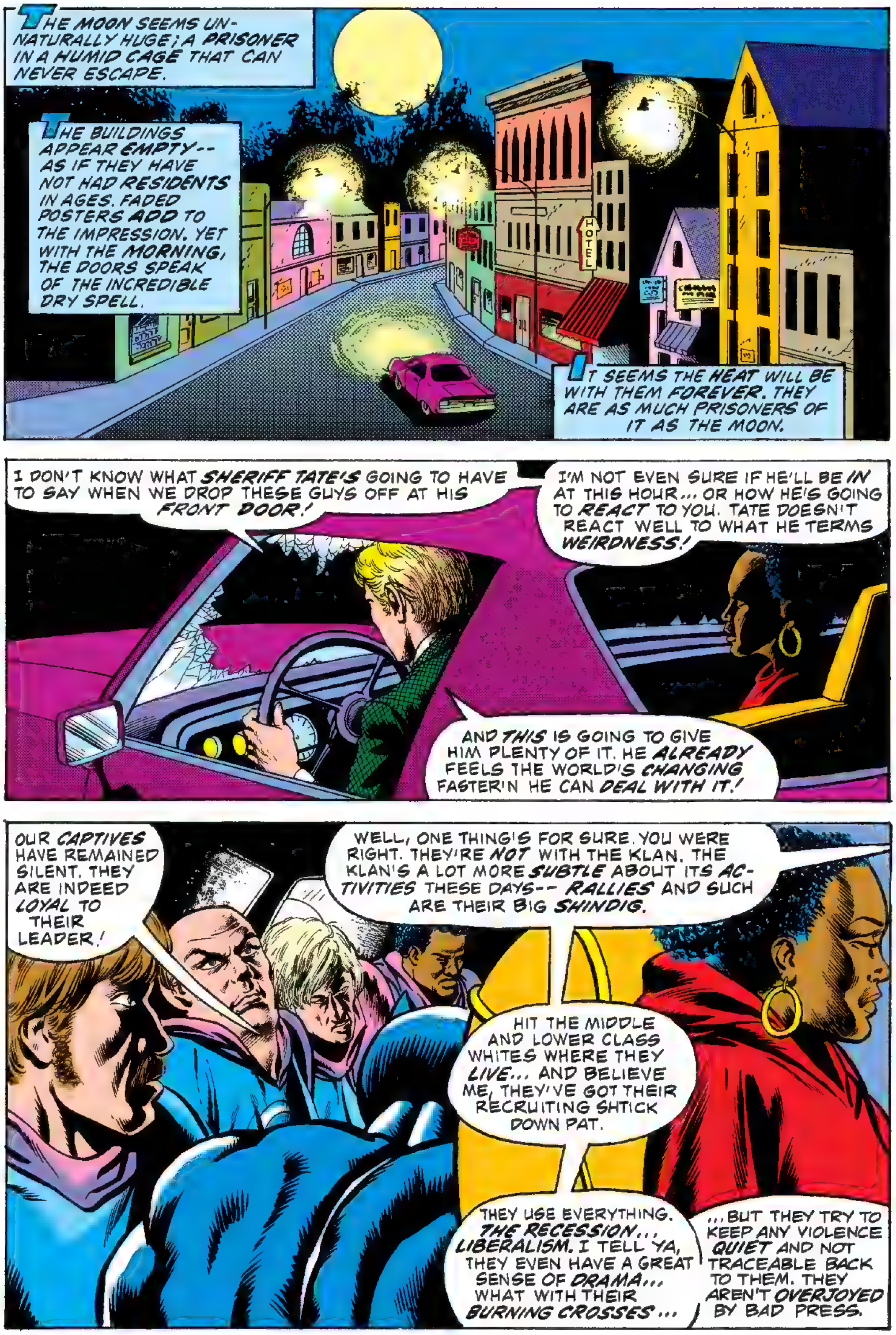

THE CAR HEADLIGHTS REVEAL THE SERRATED EDGES OF DEADLY WEAPONS. THE PANTHER SPRINGS OUTWARD, AMBER EYES JUDGING DISTANCE. THEY ARE YARDS AWAY FROM HIM. IT IS AN IMPOSSIBLE LEAP.
NOW, MY BROTHERS. LET HER FEEL THE SHARP TONGUE OF THE DRAGON!
AND OUR DEEDS WILL BE CHRONICLED IN THE SACRED TOME!
HE DROPS DOWNWARD, ANGLING TO INCREASE HIS LEAP... AND HE IS RIGHT ON TARGET!
I WAS WILLING TO GIVE ALL OF YOU THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT--
--BUT IT SEEMS MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOU WAS CORRECT.
MONICA DROPS, MUCH TO HER ATTACKER'S SURPRISE AND CHAGRIN. SHE REACHES UP TO GRIP HIS ROBES, AND HER LONG LEGS DRIVE INTO HIS STOMACH.
THE STUNT IS AMAZINGLY EFFECTIVE!
HEY, WAITAMINNIT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
I JUST DID!
THE PANTHER TURNS INTO THE GLARE OF HEADLIGHTS, SHUTTING HIS EYES SO THAT HE WILL NOT LOSE HIS NIGHT VISION.
SCREEECH!
A FOOT JAMS ONTO THE BRAKES, AND THE GRASS RIPS UP, SPEWING DIRT AND NIGHT CRAWLERS, WHILE THE SOUND OF SPLINTERING GLASS SIGNALS THE ABRUPT END TO A HUMAN FLIGHT!

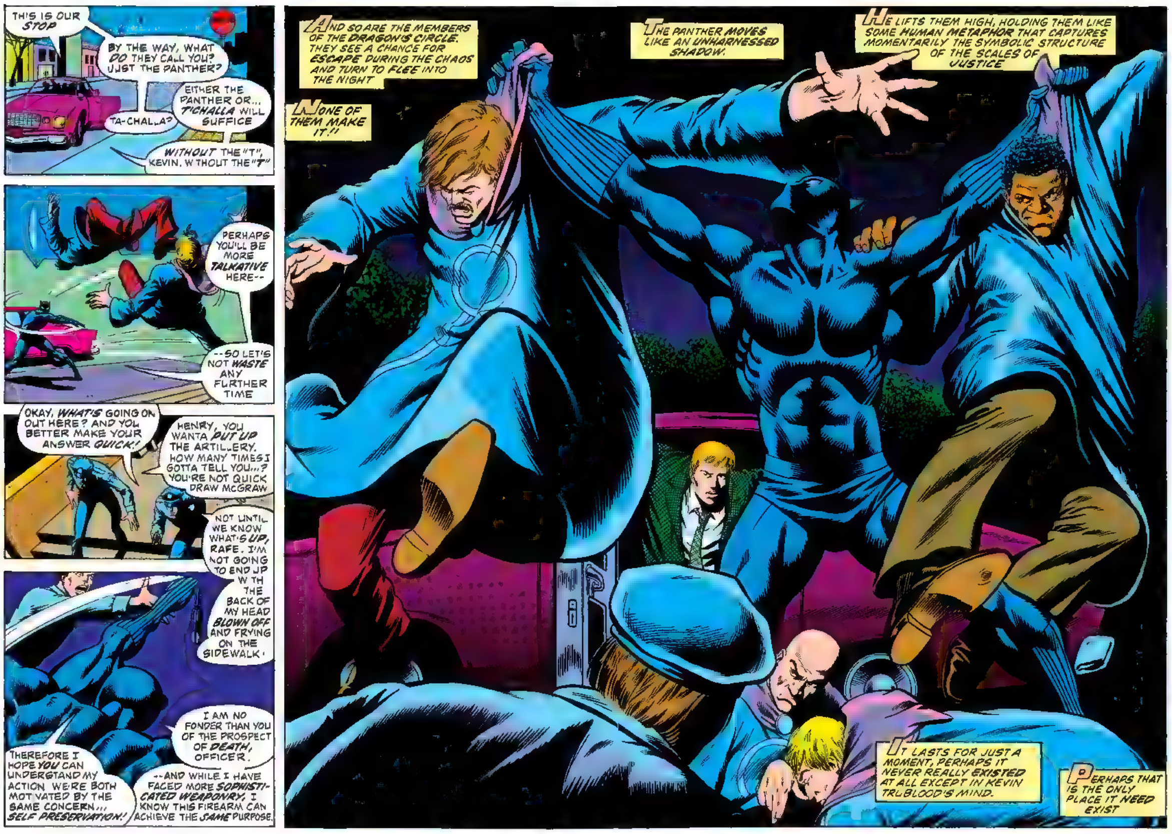

One of the robed figures reacts, startled by the bright lights, staring directly into them as he seeks to escape.
Now where--
--do you think--
--you're going?
Miss, did you just see what he did?
He... uhm... he just jumped right over the car!
Contact!
You won't feel very well when you wake up--
--but remember that you'll be lucky that you are waking up at all. The "tongue" of the dragon would not be so kind!
SPLURP!
The man behind the wheel turns and looks at the figure which hangs like an ornament through the shattered patterns of his windshield.
Shattered. Like his life has been shattered, he thinks. Nonsense patterns. So much for the delusion of a structured life.
And then he leaps from the car.
That "ballet dancer" in the blue tights can't handle everything by himself!
--so you can take this little gesture as an indication that I'm taking a hand in the fray!


YOU OKAY?
I THINK I BROKE MY HAND.
ONE OF THE HOODED FIGURES RISES FROM THE SLUMPED BODIES OF HIS BRETHREN--
--AND HE COULD BELONG TO THE THE ORDER OF SOME BENEVO-LENT MONESTERY BUT FOR THE BLADE HE HOLDS IN HIS HANDS.
WE WILL NOT BE THWARTED... YEA, WE SHALL YET O'ERCOME!
HE LAUNCHES HIMSELF AT MONICA WITH FANATIC'S FERVOR!
FULFILL THE MISSION!
DEATH IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT MISSION. BUT HE IS INTERCEPTED BEFORE THAT JAGGED BLADE CAN FIND HER FLESH.
AND IT IS DEATH THE PANTHER INTERCEPTS.
AS IF HE AND DEATH ARE INSEPARABLY LINKED.
T'CHALLA. WHAT'S HAPPENING?
HAS THE WHOLE WORLD GONE CRAZY? I THOUGHT THE VIOLENCE IN WAKANDA WOULD NEVER END. BUT IT'S EVEN HERE.
I COME BACK HOME ...AND IT'S EVEN HERE!

MY MIND KNOWS ANGELA IS DEAD... THAT SHE'S BURIED UNDER THAT STONE. AND YET IT REFUSES TO ACCEPT SHE'S REALLY THERE.
DOES A RUSHED EXPLANATION FROM MY PARENTS MAKE IT REAL? HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO ACCEPT THAT IT IS REAL...AND THAT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO THAT CAN CHANGE ANY OF THIS?
TIME!
NO EXACT AMOUNT OF TIME. JUST TIME.
I'M SORRY. I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUT.
WOULD YOU MIND NOT... SHAKING MY HAND... SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY?
YOU SHOULD NOT HIT A MAN IN THE SIDE OF THE HEAD WITH YOUR FIST.
THE MAN'S HEAD IS HARDER. REMEMBER THAT!
BLAST! IT ALWAYS LOOKED SO GOOD WHEN I WAS A KID, WATCHING JOCK MAHONEY PLAY THE RANGE RIDER ON T.V. HE'D LET HIS FIST COME UP FROM THE GROUND--
--AND THE BAD GUYS WOULD ALWAYS WAIT FOR IT TO HIT THEIR JAWS.
HE MUST'VE BROKEN EVERY BONE IN HIS HAND ALL THE WAY UP TO HIS ELBOW!
THIS MAN WILL NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION, BUT HIS WOUNDS ARE NOT SERIOUS.
I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD MAKE APOLOGIES FOR HIM. ALL WHITES ARE NOT LIKE THAT.
LIKE WHAT?
LIKE... LIKE...
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN... AND I'M AWARE OF THAT, MR...?
TRUBLOOD, BELIEVE IT OR NOT. KEVIN TRUBLOOD MAKES FOR A GOOD BY-LINE. I'M A REPORTER FOR THE GEORGIA SUN.
DID HE REALLY JUMP THAT HIGH?
YEAH, BUT DON'T WORRY, HE CAN DO MUCH BETTER.
THE REAL QUESTION IS, DID YOU COME OUT HERE, KNOWING I WAS AT MY SISTER'S GRAVESIDE... FOR SOME CHEAP STORY? THAT'S PRETTY CALLOUS, FRIEND.


I'M NOT THAT KIND OF REPORTER. I CAME TO OFFER MY CONDOLENCES... AND I REALIZE THAT'S AN EASY WORD TO USE ... BUT ALSO BECAUSE I THINK I KNOW PART OF THE REASON FOR YOUR SISTER'S MURDER!
"NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?"
"I'M NOT TRYING FOR A MELODRAMA".
I REHEARSED OUR MEETING A DOZEN TIMES ON THE WAY HERE.
I'VE BLOWN ALL MY LINES, MISS LYNNE.
NO, MS. LYNNE. ISN'T THAT THE CORRECT ADDRESS THESE DAYS?
IF YOU'D LIKE.
DON'T BE SO UPTIGHT. REMEMBER, MR. TRUBLOOD, YOU CAN'T REHEARSE LINES FOR LIFE... THAT'S ONLY FOR MOVIES.
UNFORTUNATELY... OR MAYBE FORTUNATELY... I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT!
I MET YOUR SISTER BEFORE HER DEATH.
I THINK SHE'D LOCKED INTO A LITTLE NEST OF CORRUPTION... NOTHING VERIFIED ... BUT SHE'D CONVINCED ME THAT HER SUSPICIONS COULD BE VALID.
SHE WORKED AT EZRA WILKINSON'S REALTY PLACE. REAL ESTATE AND POLITICS ARE VERY OFTEN... THIS CLOSE...
SHE THOUGHT THERE WERE KLAN MEMBERS NOT ONLY IN OUR TOWN'S REAL ESTATE--
--BUT ALSO OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE.
THE KLAN!
I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH CHANCE TO TALK WITH MOM AND DAD. T'CHALLA AND I ARRIVED ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO. I HAD TO COME OUT HERE... SEE ANGELA
HE'S THAT JUNGLE KING OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
YOU CALL HIM PANTHER-DEVIL IF YOU'D LIKE.
I'LL PASS!
I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS MR. TRUBLOOD, BUT THIS MAN'S BLACK... AND I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE KLAN TO KNOW THEY HAVEN'T OPENED THEIR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE THAT WIDE.


THE MOON SEEMS UN-NATURALLY HUGE; A PRISONER IN A HUMID CAGE THAT CAN NEVER ESCAPE.
THE BUILDINGS APPEAR EMPTY-- AS IF THEY HAVE NOT HAD RESIDENTS IN AGES. FADED POSTERS ADD TO THE IMPRESSION. YET WITH THE MORNING, THE DOORS SPEAK OF THE INCREDIBLE DRY SPELL.
HOTEL
IT SEEMS THE HEAT WILL BE WITH THEM FOREVER. THEY ARE AS MUCH PRISONERS OF IT AS THE MOON.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHERIFF TATE'S GOING TO HAVE TO SAY WHEN WE DROP THESE GUYS OFF AT HIS FRONT DOOR!
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF HE'LL BE IN AT THIS HOUR... OR HOW HE'S GOING TO REACT TO YOU. TATE DOESN'T REACT WELL TO WHAT HE TERMS WEIRDNESS!
AND THIS IS GOING TO GIVE HIM PLENTY OF IT. HE ALREADY FEELS THE WORLD'S CHANGING FASTER'N HE CAN DEAL WITH IT!
OUR CAPTIVES HAVE REMAINED SILENT. THEY ARE INDEED LOYAL TO THEIR LEADER!
WELL, ONE THING'S FOR SURE. YOU WERE RIGHT. THEY'RE NOT WITH THE KLAN. THE KLAN'S A LOT MORE SUBTLE ABOUT ITS AC-TIVITIES THESE DAYS-- RALLIES AND SUCH ARE THEIR BIG SHINDIG.
HIT THE MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASS WHITES WHERE THEY LIVE... AND BELIEVE ME, THEY'VE GOT THEIR RECRUITING SHTICK DOWN PAT.
THEY USE EVERYTHING. THE RECESSION... LIBERALISM. I TELL YA, THEY EVEN HAVE A GREAT SENSE OF DRAMA... WHAT WITH THEIR BURNING CROSSES...
...BUT THEY TRY TO KEEP ANY VIOLENCE QUIET AND NOT TRACEABLE BACK TO THEM. THEY AREN'T OVERJOYED BY BAD PRESS.

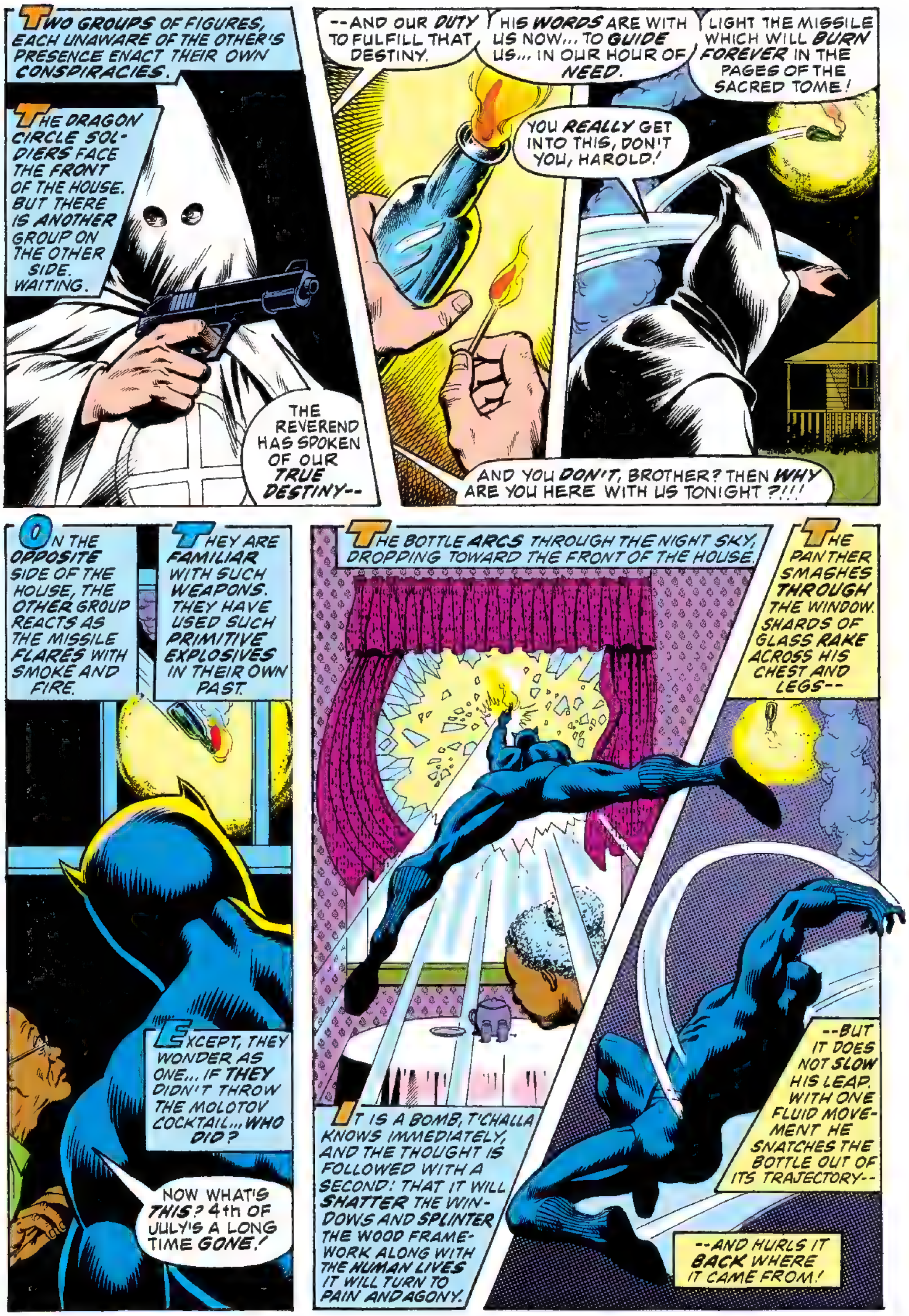


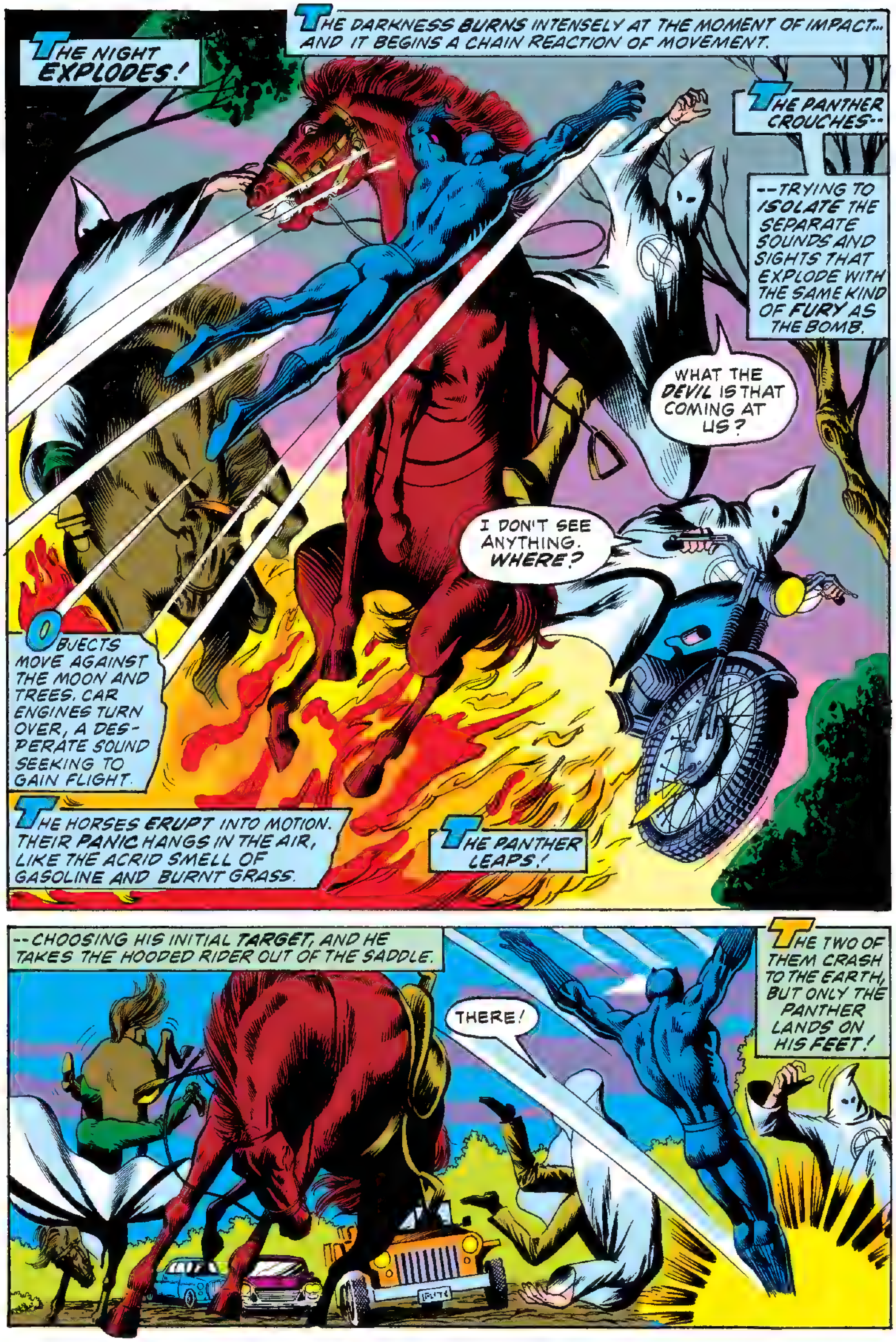
THIS IS OUR STOP
BY THE WAY, WHAT DO THEY CALL YOU? JUST THE PANTHER?
EITHER THE PANTHER OR... T'CHALLA WILL SUFFICE
TA-CHALLA?
WITHOUT THE "T", KEVIN. WITHOUT THE "T"
PERHAPS YOU'LL BE MORE TALKATIVE HERE--
--SO LET'S NOT WASTE ANY FURTHER TIME
OKAY, WHAT'S GOING ON OUT HERE? AND YOU BETTER MAKE YOUR ANSWER QUICK!
HENRY, YOU WANTA PUT UP THE ARTILLERY. HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YOU...? YOU'RE NOT QUICK DRAW McGRAW
NOT UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT'S UP, RAFE. I'M NOT GOING TO END UP WITH THE BACK OF MY HEAD BLOWN OFF AND FRYING ON THE SIDEWALK.
I AM NO FONDER THAN YOU OF THE PROSPECT OF DEATH, OFFICER.
THEREFORE I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND MY ACTION. WE'RE BOTH MOTIVATED BY THE SAME CONCERN... SELF PRESERVATION!
--AND WHILE I HAVE FACED MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY, I KNOW THIS FIREARM CAN ACHIEVE THE SAME PURPOSE.
AND SO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE DRAGON'S CIRCLE. THEY SEE A CHANCE FOR ESCAPE DURING THE CHAOS AND TURN TO FLEE INTO THE NIGHT
NONE OF THEM MAKE IT!!
THE PANTHER MOVES LIKE AN UNHARNESSED SHADOW.
HE LIFTS THEM HIGH, HOLDING THEM LIKE SOME HUMAN METAPHOR THAT CAPTURES MOMENTARILY THE SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE OF THE SCALES OF JUSTICE
IT LASTS FOR JUST A MOMENT, PERHAPS IT NEVER REALLY EXISTED AT ALL EXCEPT IN KEVIN TRUBLOOD'S MIND.
PERHAPS THAT IS THE ONLY PLACE IT NEED EXIST

SHERIFF RODERICK TATE IS TIRED AND NOT IN GOOD HUMOR.
HE WASN'T ASLEEP WHEN THE PHONE RANG, THOUGH HE'D BEEN GIVING SUCH AN ENDEAVOR HIS BEST. THE BED SHEETS WERE DAMP AND LIMP, CONSPIRING AGAINST ANY REST.
WELL, WHATTA YOU BOYS GOT TO SAY FOR YERSELVES?
AIN'T NO CRIME IN DRESSIN' UP. LOOK AT HIM! DRESSED LIKE HE WAS SOME KINDA AGENT FOR SATAN!
I SEEN HIM. PUT ALLA YOU T'GETHER... I SWEAR, YUH'D HAVE YERSELVES A REG'LAR COSTUME BALL!
BOTH HE AND THE WOMAN HAVE LIED! HE ATTACKED US!
NOW, MISS LYNNE, I CAN HEAR YOUR WORDS WITHOUT YOUR SPEAKIN' EM!
Y'SEE, THESE HERE ARE LOCAL BOYS... WHICH DON'T GIVE 'EM NO SPECIAL LEA-WAY, LIKE THEY MIGHT THINK.
NOW, YOU MADE YERSELF A GOOD POINT THERE, MR. LAWYER-TYPE JEDIDIAH THORP ...CEPTIN' I NEVER KNEW YOU HAD NO DEGREE... NO SIR!
BUT SEEIN' AS YOU GOT YERSELF SO WELL EDUCATED, YOU MIGHT RECOLLECT THAT THERE'S A LAW AGAINST THE DESECRATION OF BURIAL GROUNDS.
NOW YOU DON'T WANNA SPEND SOME TIME BEHIND BARS COOLIN' YOUR HEELS, YOU BETTER GET YOUR ACT T'GETHER--
--AN' TELL ME WHAT KINDA FOOL CLUB YOU BELONG TO AND JUST WHAT IT WAS YOU HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE CEMETERY.
THEY ALL LOOK AWAY, SEEKING STRENGTH IN THEIR NUMBERS. DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES, THEY ALL HAVE A SIMILARITY. THEY'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH THE SAME INDOCTRINATION COURSE!
THEY ARE WILLING TO MAKE THEIR SACRIFICES... EVEN IF IT COSTS THEM THEIR FREEDOM...

THE HEAT LINGERS THROUGH THE NEXT DAY, A HOSTILE GUEST RELUCTANT TO LEAVE AND REJOICING IN ITS VICTIMS' TORMENT.
THE LYNNE HOUSEHOLD IS FILLED WITH THE AROMA OF COUNTRY FRIED CHICKEN, SPARE RIBS, HAMHOCKS, CHIT'LINS, COLLARD GREENS AND HOMEMADE CORNBREAD.
JESSICA LYNNE HAS SPENT A LIFETIME AT THIS STOVE, IGNORING THE HEAT OUTSIDE AS WELL AS THE SUFFOCATING AIR FROM THE OVEN, AS IF SHE IS IMMUNE TO THE WEATHER.
WE MADE A LIFE OUT HERE. YOU DO THE BEST YOU CAN AND MAKE SOME KINDA LIFE OUTTA WHAT YOU'RE GIVEN.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, T'CHALLA THINKS. SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE.
PRO'BLY AIN'T MUCH TO YOU.
YOU'RE WRONG, MRS. LYNNE, AND I HAVED DINED AT BANQUETS THAT DID NOT MATCH YOUR SUPERB COOKING.
I MUST ADMIT, THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY DIFFERENT TYPE OF LIFE THAN I HAVE EXPERIENCED, EVEN DURING MY PREVIOUS STAY IN YOUR COUNTRY.
MOM STILL MAKES HER LEMONADE FRESH, LIKE WHEN WE WERE KIDS.
I THINK WE BUILT OUR LIVES... OR AT LEAST SURVIVED... BECAUSE OF THAT LEMONADE!
GUESS IT'S A WAY OF LIFE YOU DON'T SEE MUCH OF ANYMORE. IT'S PASSING AWAY!
ONE MAN. ONE WOMAN. SOMETIMES HATING EACH OTHER. SOMETIMES WILLING TO FORGIVE.
WHEN MAKIN' A FAMILY SURVIVE THRU HARD TIMES ATE UP YOUR LIFE.
IT WAS ENOUGH TO JUST GET ON THROUGH!
DAD ALWAYS HAD HIS CARDS... LIKE HIS LIFE WAS ONE CONTINUOUS GAME OF SOLITAIRE, OCCASSIONALLY INTERRUPTED BY OTHER THINGS.
I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE THE GAME WAS THE ONE THING HE FELT HE HAD A CHANCE OF WINNIN'.
HEY! YOU, CHILE! YOU HOLD YOUR TONGUE!

MRS. LYNNE, YOUR COURTESY TOWARD MY PRESENCE HAS BEEN MOST... GRACIOUS... I THANK BOTH YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND FOR YOUR KINDNESS.
I HATE TO DARKEN SUCH AN ELEGANT MEAL... AND I HOPE YOU WILL NOT TAKE OFFENSE... BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE AVOIDED TALKING ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER'S DEATH!
THE SUBJECT IS AVOIDED DELICATELY... BUT I AM NOT SURE IT IS A SUBJECT YOU CAN HAVE THE COMFORT OF AVOIDING.
I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!
I MEAN, WHATEVER CAUSED ANGELA'S MURDER... AND YOU HAVEN'T TALKED MUCH ABOUT IT!
IT MAY NOT BE THE LAST ACT OF VIOLENCE. THE ATTACK ON MONICA SEEMS TO PROVE THAT.
IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE PRISONERS DO NOT BELONG TO THE KLAN ITSELF... BUT TO SOMETHING CALLED THE DRAGON'S CIRCLE!
AND YET, THEY HAD KLAN ITEMS ON THEIR PERSONS. PATCHES THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE KLAN, AND A COPY OF THE KLAN NEWSPAPER.
IF THEY AREN'T A PART OF THE KLAN, WHY DID THEY HAVE ALL THOSE ITEMS ON THEM?
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW HOW IT IS WHERE YOU COME FROM... BUT THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF PAIN IN THIS FAMILY DURING THE LAST FEW WEEKS--
THE HOUSE GOES QUIET. IT SEEMS SUDDENLY DEFENSELESS, AND THE PANTHER HAS THE FEELING THAT HE IS AN INVADER IN THIS DOMAIN!
--AN THE KINDA QUESTIONS YOU'RE ASKIN' COULD BRING A LOT MORE PAIN. NOW I WOULDN'T MIND IF I THOUGHT THEM QUESTIONS WERE GONNA PROVE SOMETHING MORE THAN--
--CAUSING US MORE PAIN!
AND YET, BEYOND, IN THE SHADOWS THAT SURROUND THE HOUSE, FIGURES MOVE TOWARD THE LIGHT... READY TO RIP THE NIGHT APART.


TWO GROUPS OF FIGURES, EACH UNAWARE OF THE OTHER'S PRESENCE ENACT THEIR OWN CONSPIRACIES.
THE DRAGON CIRCLE SOLDIERS FACE THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER GROUP ON THE OTHER SIDE. WAITING.
THE REVEREND HAS SPOKEN OF OUR TRUE DESTINY--
--AND OUR DUTY TO FULFILL THAT DESTINY.
HIS WORDS ARE WITH US NOW... TO GUIDE US... IN OUR HOUR OF NEED.
YOU REALLY GET INTO THIS, DON'T YOU, HAROLD!
AND YOU DON'T, BROTHER? THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE WITH US TONIGHT ?!!!
LIGHT THE MISSILE WHICH WILL BURN FOREVER IN THE PAGES OF THE SACRED TOME!
ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE HOUSE, THE OTHER GROUP REACTS AS THE MISSILE FLARES WITH SMOKE AND FIRE.
THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH SUCH WEAPONS. THEY HAVE USED SUCH PRIMITIVE EXPLOSIVES IN THEIR OWN PAST.
EXCEPT, THEY WONDER AS ONE... IF THEY DIDN'T THROW THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL... WHO DID?
NOW WHAT'S THIS? 4th OF JULY'S A LONG TIME GONE!
THE BOTTLE ARCS THROUGH THE NIGHT SKY, DROPPING TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.
IT IS A BOMB, T'CHALLA KNOWS IMMEDIATELY, AND THE THOUGHT IS FOLLOWED WITH A SECOND: THAT IT WILL SHATTER THE WINDOWS AND SPLINTER THE WOOD FRAMEWORK ALONG WITH THE HUMAN LIVES IT WILL TURN TO PAIN AND AGONY.
THE PANTHER SMASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW. SHARDS OF GLASS RAKE ACROSS HIS CHEST AND LEGS--
--BUT IT DOES NOT SLOW HIS LEAP. WITH ONE FLUID MOVEMENT HE SNATCHES THE BOTTLE OUT OF ITS TRAJECTORY--
--AND HURLS IT BACK WHERE IT CAME FROM!


THE NIGHT EXPLODES!
THE DARKNESS BURNS INTENSELY AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT... AND IT BEGINS A CHAIN REACTION OF MOVEMENT.
THE PANTHER CROUCHES--
--TRYING TO ISOLATE THE SEPARATE SOUNDS AND SIGHTS THAT EXPLODE WITH THE SAME KIND OF FURY AS THE BOMB.
WHAT THE DEVIL IS THAT COMING AT US?
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING. WHERE?
OBJECTS MOVE AGAINST THE MOON AND TREES. CAR ENGINES TURN OVER, A DESPERATE SOUND SEEKING TO GAIN FLIGHT.
THE HORSES ERUPT INTO MOTION. THEIR PANIC HANGS IN THE AIR, LIKE THE ACRID SMELL OF GASOLINE AND BURNT GRASS.
THE PANTHER LEAPS!
--CHOOSING HIS INITIAL TARGET, AND HE TAKES THE HOODED RIDER OUT OF THE SADDLE.
THERE!
THE TWO OF THEM CRASH TO THE EARTH, BUT ONLY THE PANTHER LANDS ON HIS FEET!

THE DRAGON SOLDIERS ARE EQUALLY DISMAYED BY THIS REACTION TO THEIR ATTACK.
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?
WHO DID YOU THINK THEY ARE, HAROLD? IT'S THE KLAN!
THEN, THEY HAVE UNWITTINGLY PLAYED INTO THE FAVOR OF OUR ORDAINED DESTINY.
NOW, WHILE THEY DISTRACT THE LYNNE'S DEFENDER... WE SHALL COMPLETE OUR SANCTIONED MISSION.
GET DOWN, MOM!
DAD, WILL YOU GET RID OF THOSE CARDS? PLEASE!!
NOT ON YOUR LIFE, GIRL. ALL'S I NEED IS A RED JACK AN' I'M GONNA WIN THIS HERE GAME!
THE PANTHER COMMANDEERS ONE OF THE FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE JEEPS AND DIRECTS IT TOWARD ITS OWNERS--
--BUT HE REACHES THEM LONG BEFORE THE VEHICLE CAN.
THAT TURKEY'S OUT OF HIS HEAD!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE MISTAKEN ABOUT THAT.
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE AT THE MOMENT. NOWHERE AT ALL!

HE LASHES OUT! THE PAIN THAT LLOYD LYNNE SPOKE OF SEEMS PERSONIFIED IN THIS ONE FIGURE.
--AS IF HE IS A DISTILLATION OF ALL THE PAIN THAT HAS TORN THAT HOUSEHOLD IN THE PAST--
--AND CONTINUES TO THREATEN IT IN THE PRESENT.
THE STILL, HOT SEPTEMBER NIGHT IS ALIVE WITH BATTLEFIELD EXCLAMATIONS. BLOOD AND SACRIFICES EACH SACRIFICE EXACTING A BRUTAL PAYMENT.
THE PANTHER TURNS TO WITNESS AN EXODUS IN PROGRESS. A FANTASY NIGHTMARE OF GOBLINS AND NASTIES FLEEING FROM REAL SCARECROWS.
THEY ARE ALMOST LAUGHABLE IN THEIR SINGLE-MINDED ATTEMPT TO FIND SECLUSION IN THE DARKNESS.
THESE TWO WOULD APPEAR TO BE MEMBERS OF THE KLAN, MR. LYNNE--
--AND NOT JUST TWISTED MIMICRY OF SUCH PEOPLE.
I DON'T THINK EITHER OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS ARE GOING TO GIVE YOU THE OPTION OF LEAVING THIS ALONE.
WELL... YOU AIN'T AS BAD AS I THOUGHT WHEN I FIRST SEEN YOU... STILL KINDA WEIRD, BUT NOT BAD...
I GUESS!
HEY THERE! SEE THAT, MONICA? MY RED JACK!! KNEW IT WAS DUE TO COME UP.
TELL YOU SUMTHIN' ELSE. I DON'T MIND FIGHTIN' BACK WHEN I'M BIT, MISTER--
--AN' WHAT YOU DID, YOU DID RIGHT WELL. BUT YOU JUST CAUSED US A WHOLE LOTTA TROUBLE IN A WAY...
IT AIN'T GONNA END HERE... YOU CAN BET ON THAT!
NEXT
THEY TOLD ME A MYTH I WANTED TO BELIEVE!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

A FOREWORD ABOUT THE END OF PANTHER'S RAGE

You came through, People!

Your response to the conclusion of the Panther's epic confrontation with Killmonger was nothing less than enthusiastically resounding.

Forthwith are some of those responses, and many of them are in interesting contrast with several of the reactions that were garnered right here in the Bullpen. Don didn't realize what a controversial hornet's nest he was ramming into when he had T'Challa saved by that "younger version of himself," Kantu. Some were outraged by it. Some thought it negated the entire series. Others claimed that they didn't care how it ended except that was a stupid way to end it. On the other hand, there were positive responses also, and many of them, especially, were from you people who have been steady followers of the Marvel mythos.

And on that note, we cut to your reactions, People.

Don and Billy,

I enjoyed the ending of PANTHER'S RAGE.

Many times I wanted to write you on this series. I figured I better write now since the novel's over (was it really 12 chapters?).

Don, you have one of the most unique styles in comics. Your writing is definitely lyrical; words seem to have a rhythm. You combine this with intense insights in life and values, then top it off with good plotting, action and ending.

Kantu's revenge was, of course, fitting; and was a refreshing break compared to many of the comics that are out. I wanted so much for Kantu to "do the job" and to see Killmonger defeated.

I can't continue without mentioning that your subplots and supporting characters were tremendously interesting. I was glad to see Venomm starting to lose some of his hate. Sometimes I forget that so much of the story does depend on background characters being real. When the background is real, the events occurring seem more plausible and personal.

After all, I can't really completely relate to T'Challa — he's sleek, pantherish and resistant! I'm a background character. Most of us are. Tremendous job, Don.

Billy, you too have one of the most impressive "unique" styles. I really enjoy your method of storytelling. It seems a writer like McGregor would give most artists fits with his interplay of plots and personal reflections. You seem to reflect the story and mirror Don's writing. It's uncanny and hard to notice but that's because it is so natural.

An example of this is pages 9 and 10. Don describes the conflict between T'Challa and Killmonger. Billy has T'Challa and Killmonger. Billy has T'Challa on one side and Killmonger on the other. This is simple –but you separate them with small panels highlighting the Panther slashing through men—he is...the PANTHER! I like the way he glides. You then follow this with small "out of the way" panels. T'Challa is not here, but his role is to come. A sense of symmetry. How fitting and how fitting the writing and art.

I would go on, but I would start raving then. Suffice it to say, I loved (literally) your work on this series. I have to say (how many times do you hear this?) that I never expected THE BLACK PANTHER to be this good.

Pete DeLaurentis
(no address given)

Billy and Don worked very closely on the layouts of that issue of The Panther, Pete, including the visual separation of the Panther and Killmonger. We're glad it worked so well.

By the way, last issue, wherein the "Epilogue" to "Panther's Rage" took place, one of the creative talents that worked on that issue never received credit. Actually, the coloring credits (blush) were scrambled in our inimitable fashion and Glitzy Glynis (do they really call Glynis Glitzy? Sheesh!) Wein's name appeared on our splash page when in reality it was the tremendous talent of Don Warfield that imbued those pages with such vibrant color. Don't blame Glynis, Folks. It wasn't her fault. And Don, you know how frenetic things can be around here at times. We're sorry for the oversight, and both Don and Billy thank you for a very perceptive coloring job.

Don and Billy,

Wow.

The conclusion of PANTHER'S RAGE was a classic. In 19 pages, you gave us a glimpse of practically every character JUNGLE ACTION has delivered to us. Venomm, Taku, W'Kabi, Monica, Baron Macabre, Malice, King Cadaver, Lord Karnal, Killmonger, T'Challa.

And Kantu, ESPECIALLY Kantu!

Who would have believed that Killmonger, the seemingly-omnipotent revolutionary who has kept T'Challa on the verge of losing his kingdom, lo, these past dozen issues, would meet *his*, and not by a misfiring of his own schemes, nor by the might of the Black Panther's arm, but by a nine year old boy. One of the "faceless masses" who are the ultimate losers in any such raging conflict. One does not have to be "great," or "larger-than-life" to have an important effect on the course of events.

I congratulate you, Don and Billy. A truly superb ending to what must surely be one of comics' greatest tales.

And—er—could you point me in the direction of the Wakanda Con—?

Bruce Canwell
Meadows Rd. RFD #2
Bowdoin, ME 04008

Well, to attend the Wakanda Con, Bruce, you first have to know where Wakanda is, and since T'Challa has done such a fine job of keeping that place secret we have the feeling even the C.I.A. is going to have trouble attending those festivities.

Anyhow, if T'Challa ever breaks down and sends directions we'll pass them on to you. Fair enough?

You know, Folks, Don has been working on the Black Panther strip now for over two years and Billy is rapidly approaching his second anniversary. Both of these guys have spent a vast amount of time working on this series, striving to achieve the very best presentation possible.

And finally, it is finished.

Sometimes we delude ourselves into thinking we actually accomplished something, that it was all worth the struggle, the pain and the heartache...never mind, you get the idea.

And then, someone lays it on the line.

Dear Don,

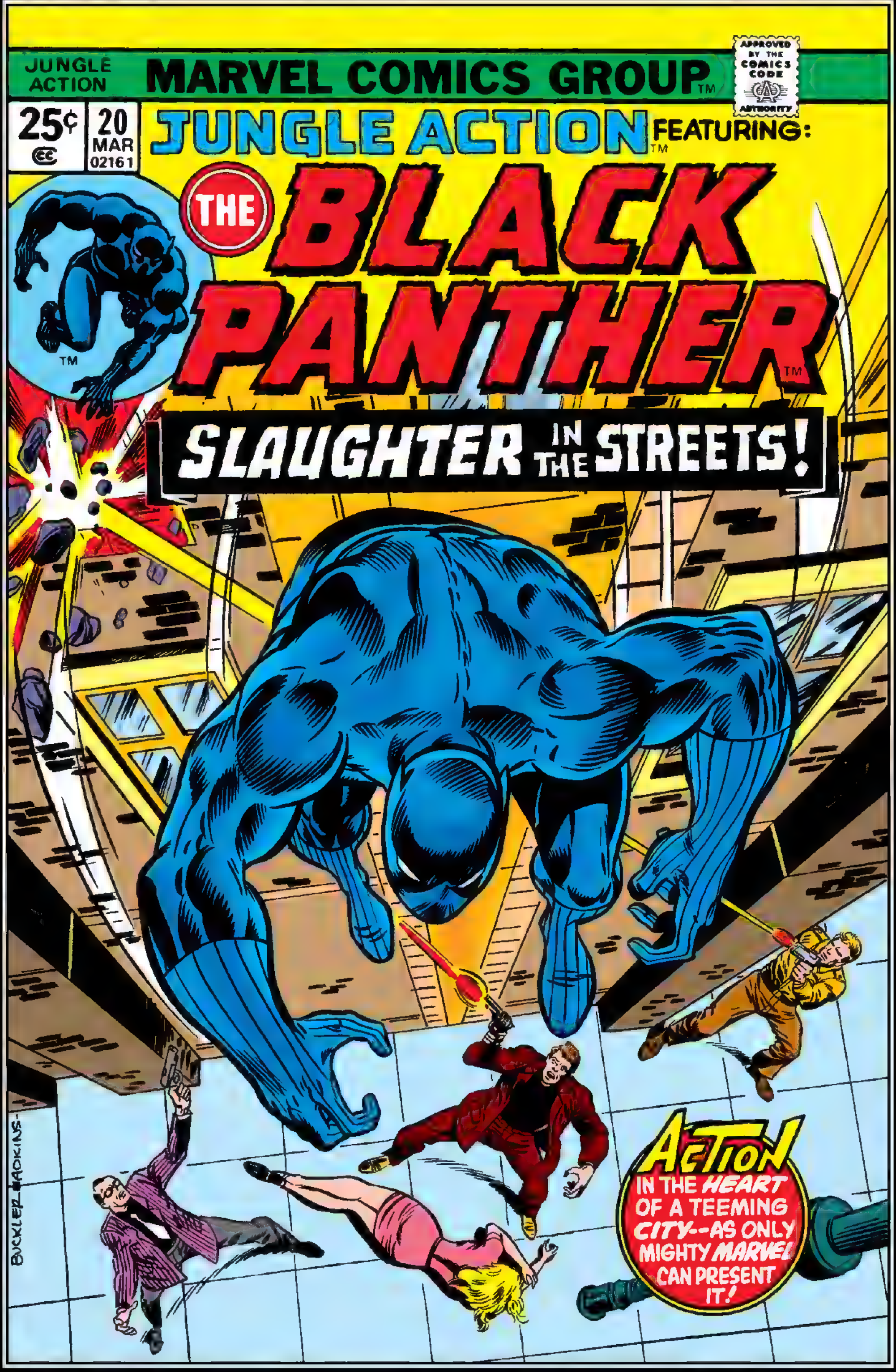
Okay but what do you do for an encore?

Stan Timmons
913 South 23rd Street
Lafayette, IN 47905

NEXT ISSUE: What we do for an encore? "They Told Me a Myth I Wanted to Believe!" It begins in a supermarket, Friends, and you know that anyplace the Black Panther goes things aren't going to stay quiet for long. We'll also be introducing many of our new supporting cast of characters, as well as an incredibly terrifying flashback that details the murder of Monica's sister, Angela! All you detective fans who played the deductive game so eagerly back when Zatama was murdered, you better get out your eyeglasses once anew and clean them off. We'll merely give you the hint, the clues will be there if you can spot them.

And with that challenge hurled into the gambit, we'll take our leave.

Hang in there, People.


JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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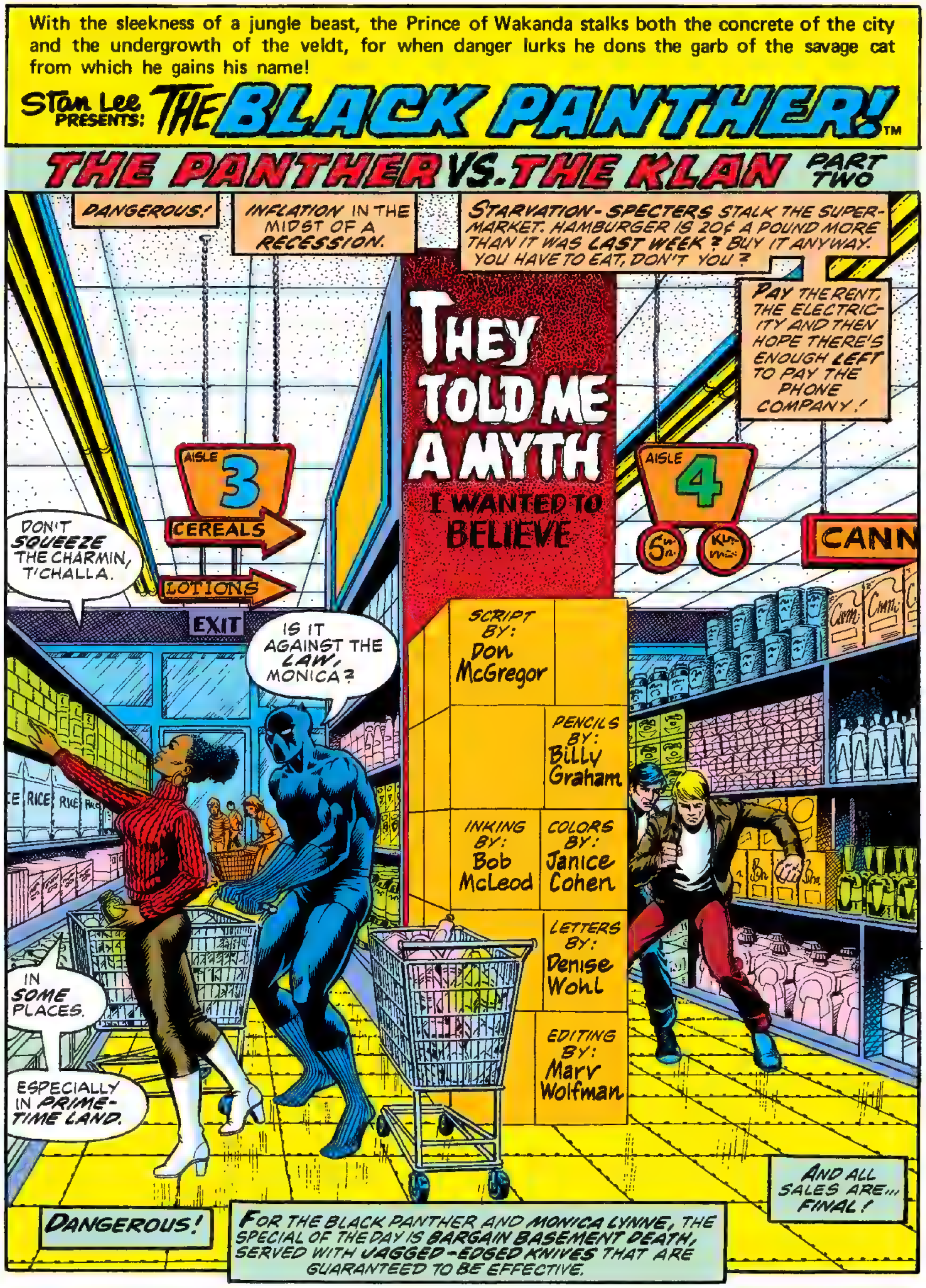
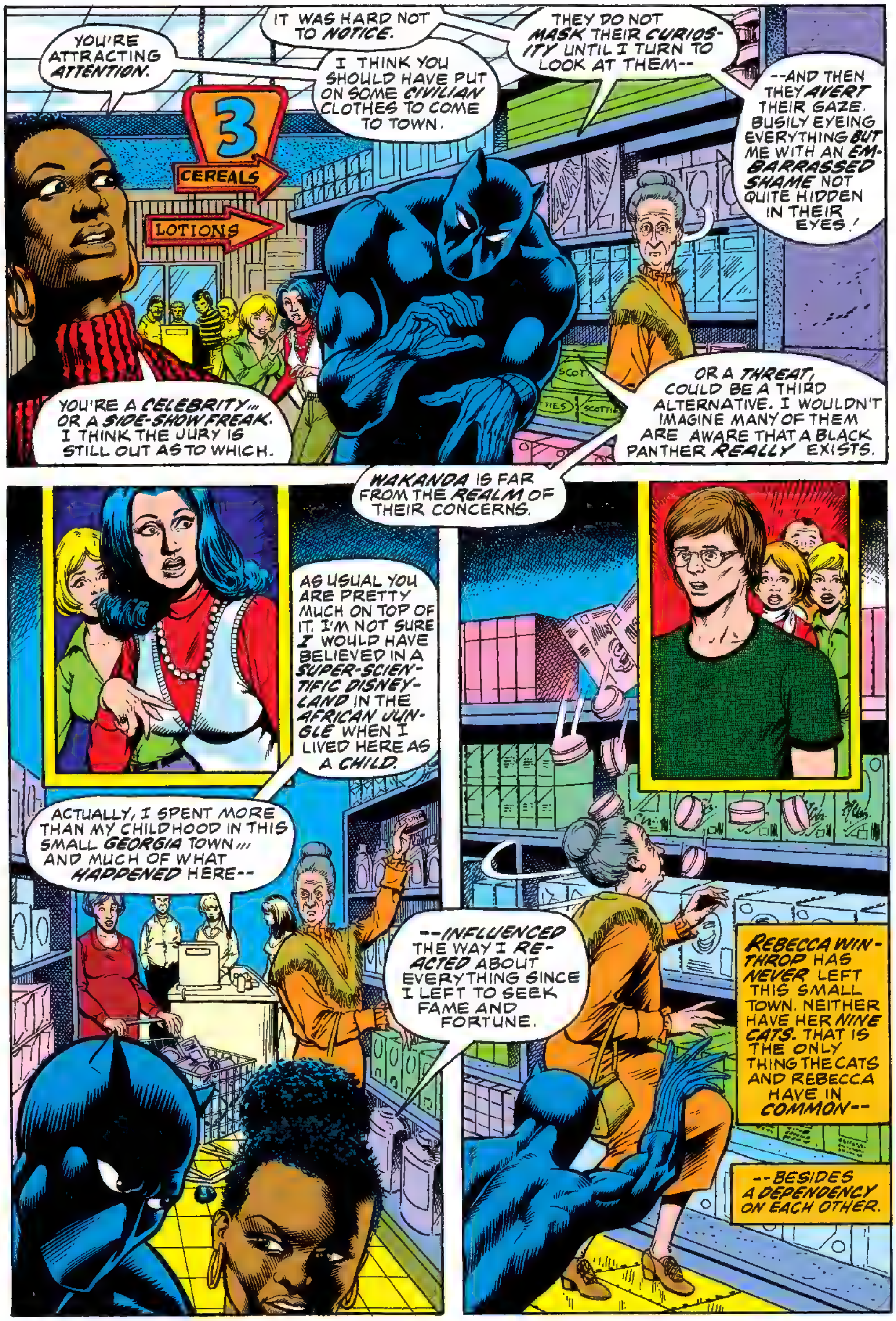
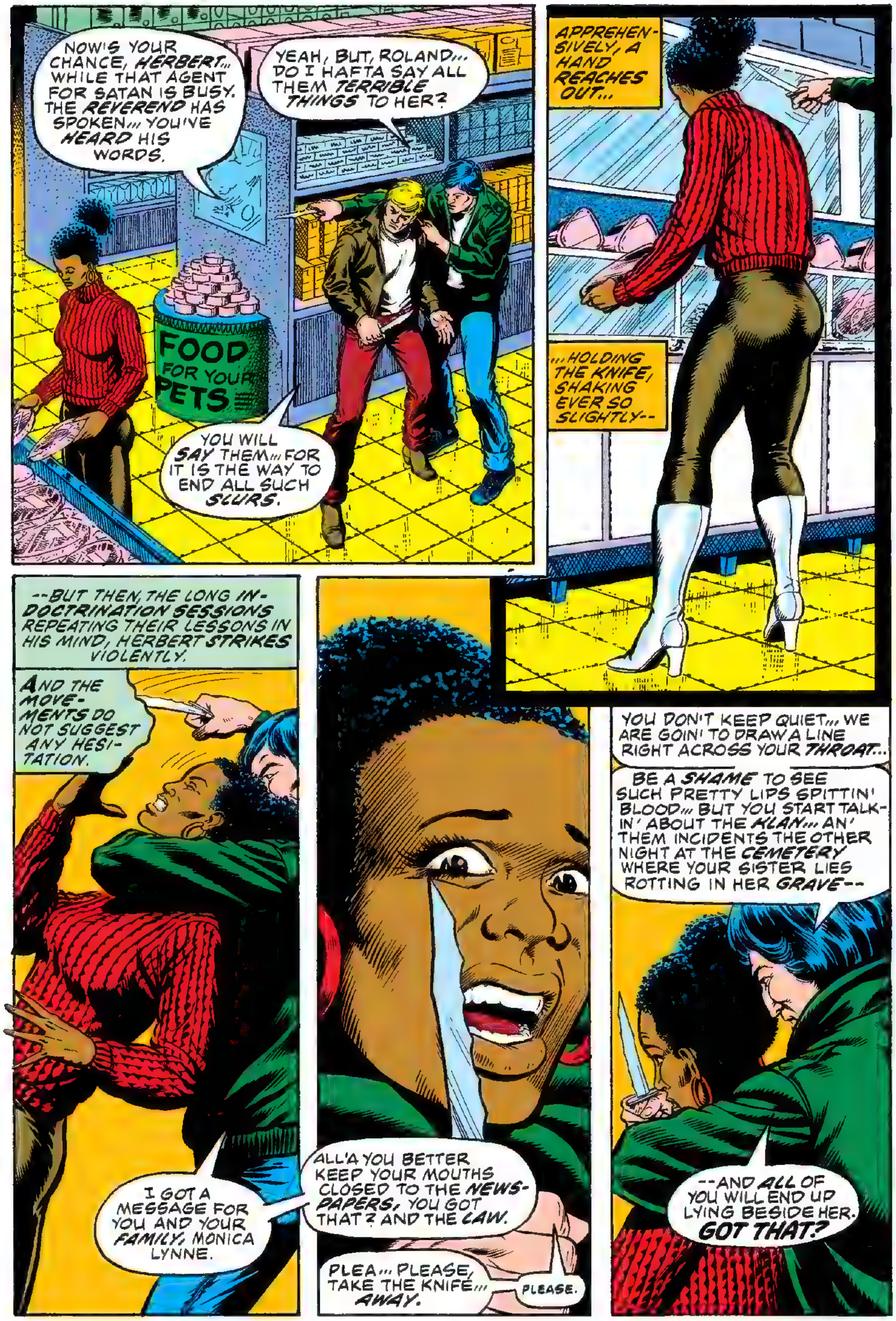
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
SLAUGHTER IN THE STREETS!
ACTION IN THE HEART OF A TEEMING CITY--AS ONLY MIGHTY MARVEL CAN PRESENT IT!
BUCKLER-JANSON

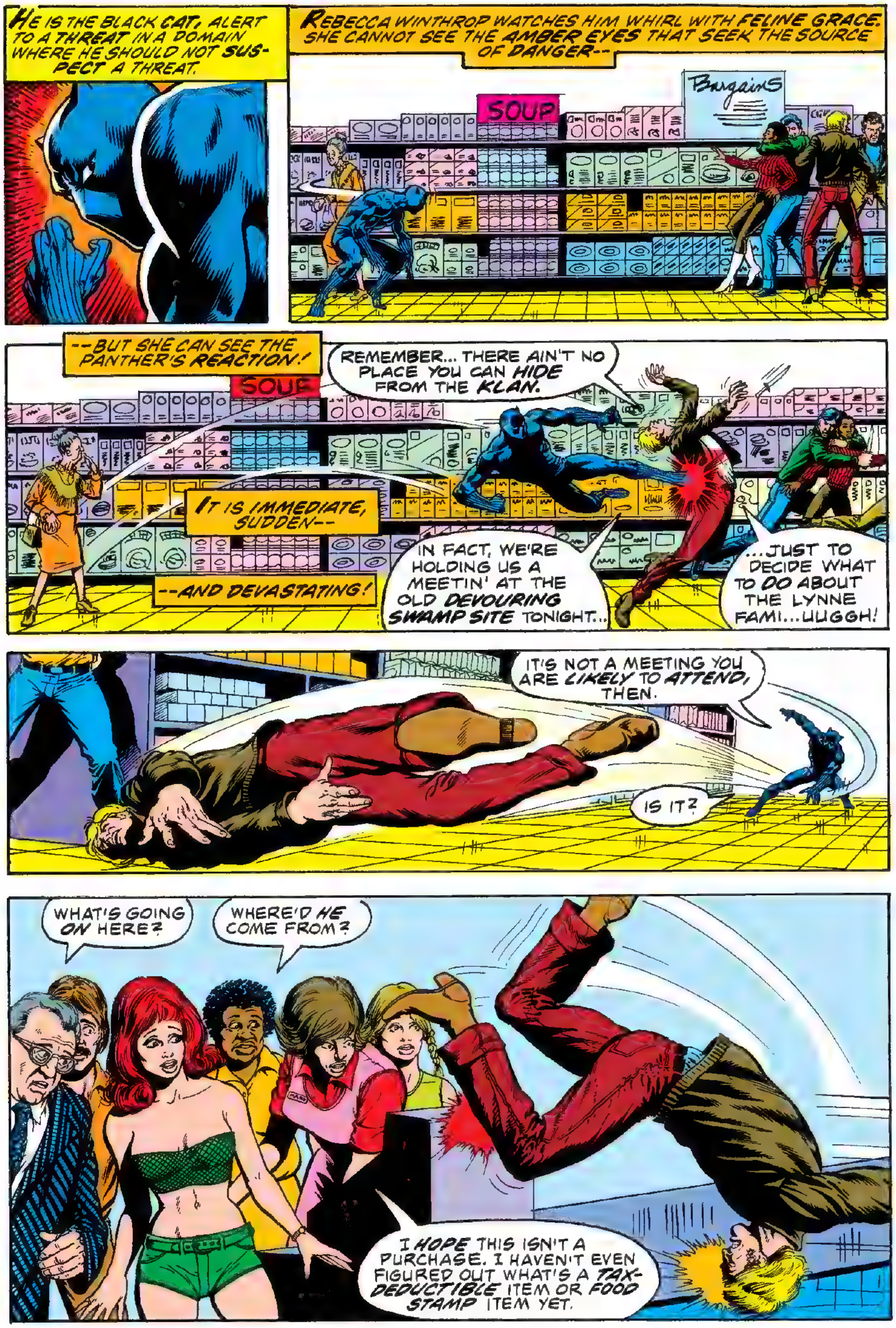


With the sleekness of a jungle beast, the Prince of Wakanda stalks both the concrete of the city and the undergrowth of the veldt, for when danger lurks he dons the garb of the savage cat from which he gains his name!
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
THE PANTHER VS. THE KLAN PART TWO
DANGEROUS!
INFLATION IN THE MIDST OF A RECESSION.
STARVATION-SPECTERS STALK THE SUPER-MARKET. HAMBURGER IS 20¢ A POUND MORE THAN IT WAS LAST WEEK? BUY IT ANYWAY. YOU HAVE TO EAT, DON'T YOU?
PAY THE RENT, THE ELECTRICITY AND THEN HOPE THERE'S ENOUGH LEFT TO PAY THE PHONE COMPANY!
THEY TOLD ME A MYTH I WANTED TO BELIEVE
AISLE 3
CEREALS
LOTIONS
EXIT
AISLE 4
CANN
DON'T SQUEEZE THE CHARMIN, T'CHALLA.
IS IT AGAINST THE LAW, MONICA?
SCRIPT BY: Don McGregor
PENCILS BY: Billy Graham
INKING BY: Bob McLeod
COLORS BY: Janice Cohen
LETTERS BY: Denise Wohl
EDITING BY: Marv Wolfman
IN SOME PLACES.
ESPECIALLY IN PRIME-TIME LAND.
AND ALL SALES ARE... FINAL!
DANGEROUS!
FOR THE BLACK PANTHER AND MONICA LYNNE, THE SPECIAL OF THE DAY IS BARGAIN BASEMENT DEATH, SERVED WITH JAGGED-EDGED KNIVES THAT ARE GUARANTEED TO BE EFFECTIVE.

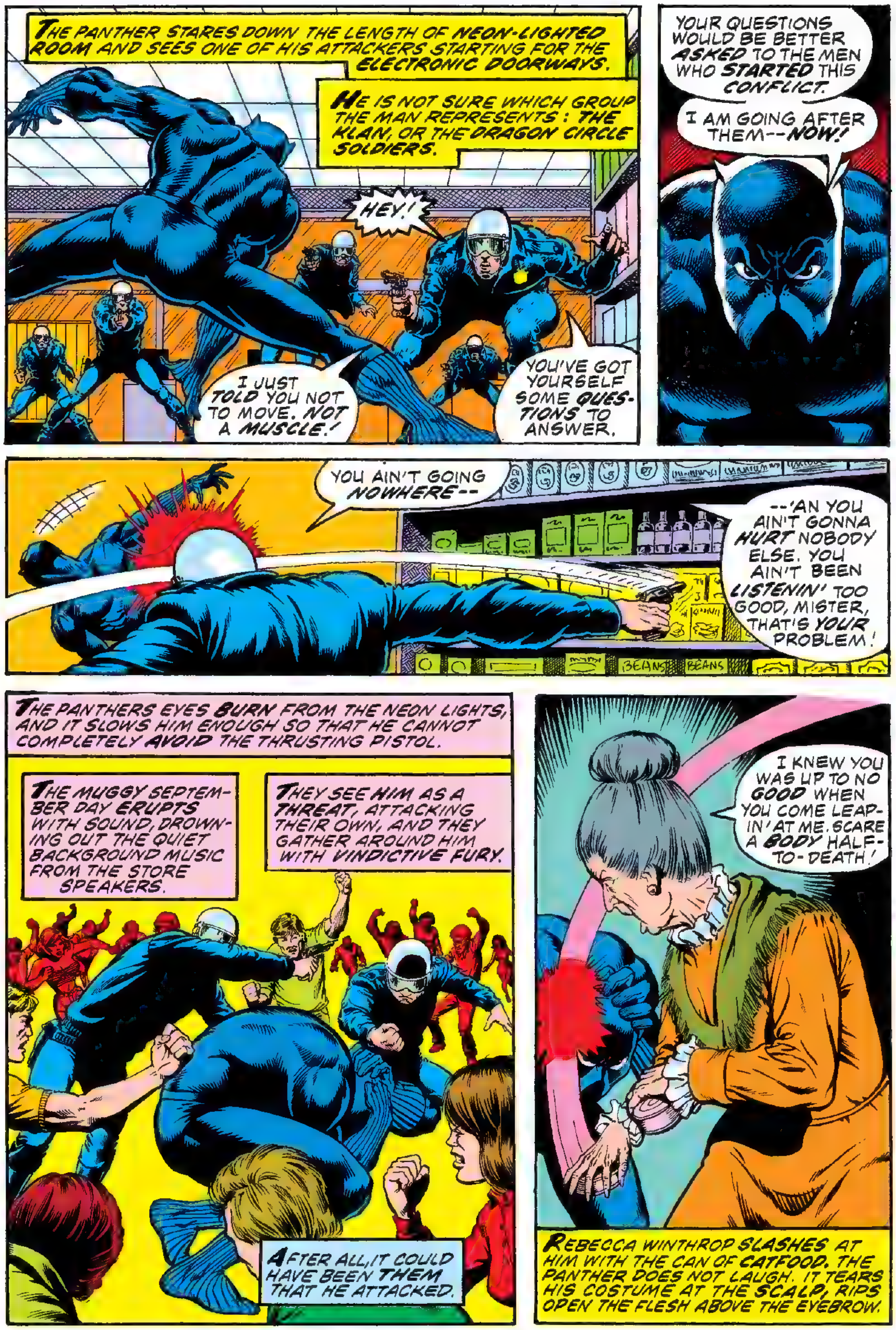


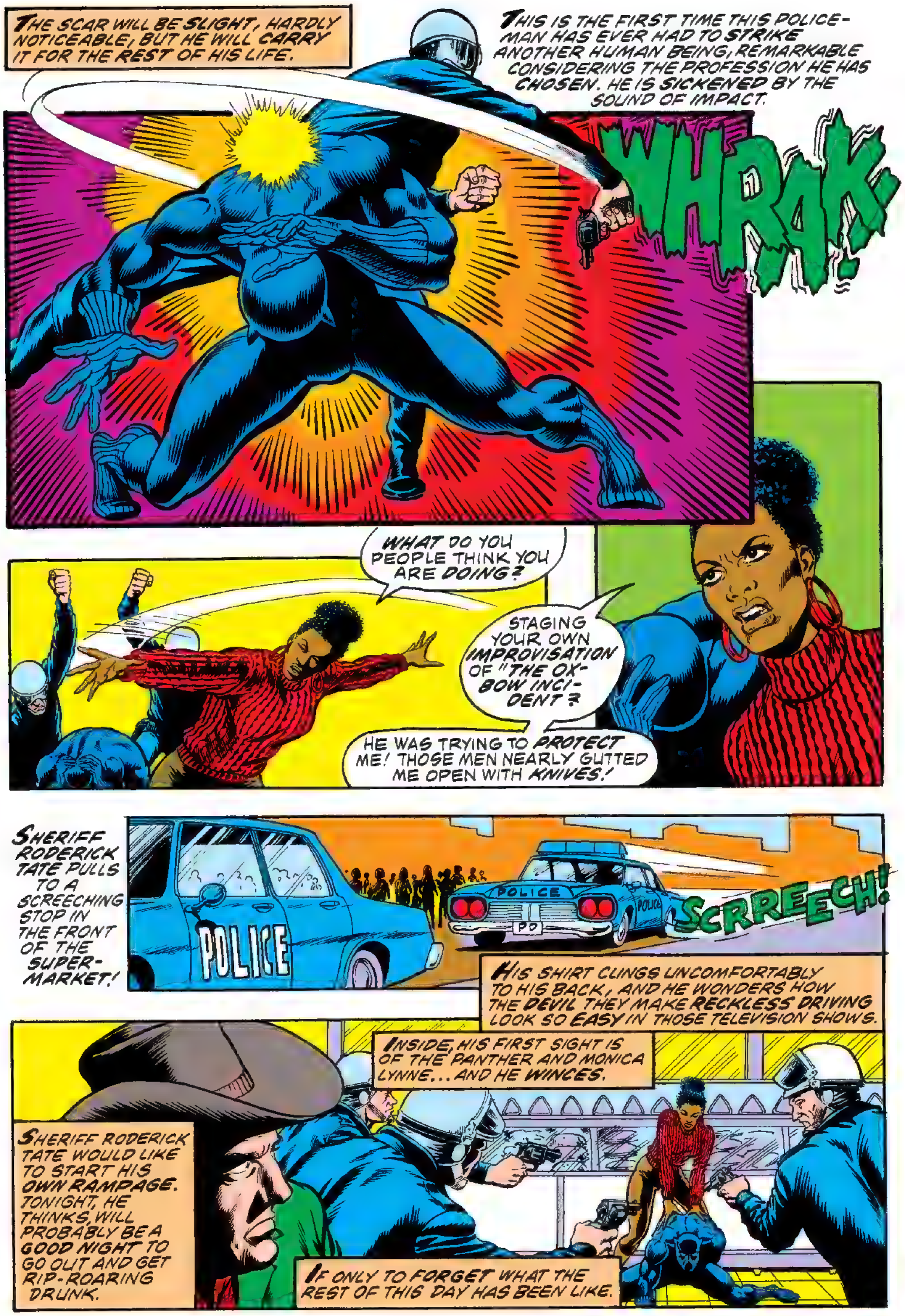
YOU'RE ATTRACTING ATTENTION.
IT WAS HARD NOT TO NOTICE.
I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE PUT ON SOME CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO COME TO TOWN.
THEY DO NOT MASK THEIR CURIOSITY UNTIL I TURN TO LOOK AT THEM--
--AND THEN THEY AVERT THEIR GAZE. BUSILY EYEING EVERYTHING BUT ME WITH AN EMBARRASSED SHAME NOT QUITE HIDDEN IN THEIR EYES!
3
CEREALS
LOTIONS
YOU'RE A CELEBRITY... OR A SIDE-SHOW FREAK. I THINK THE JURY IS STILL OUT AS TO WHICH.
OR A THREAT, COULD BE A THIRD ALTERNATIVE. I WOULDN'T IMAGINE MANY OF THEM ARE AWARE THAT A BLACK PANTHER REALLY EXISTS.
WAKANDA IS FAR FROM THE REALM OF THEIR CONCERNS.
AS USUAL YOU ARE PRETTY MUCH ON TOP OF IT. I'M NOT SURE I WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IN A SUPER-SCIENTIFIC DISNEYLAND IN THE AFRICAN JUNGLE WHEN I LIVED HERE AS A CHILD.
ACTUALLY, I SPENT MORE THAN MY CHILDHOOD IN THIS SMALL GEORGIA TOWN... AND MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENED HERE--
--INFLUENCED THE WAY I REACTED ABOUT EVERYTHING SINCE I LEFT TO SEEK FAME AND FORTUNE.
REBECCA WINTHROP HAS NEVER LEFT THIS SMALL TOWN. NEITHER HAVE HER NINE CATS. THAT IS THE ONLY THING THE CATS AND REBECCA HAVE IN COMMON--
--BESIDES A DEPENDENCY ON EACH OTHER.


NOW'S YOUR CHANCE, HERBERT... WHILE THAT AGENT FOR SATAN IS BUSY. THE REVEREND HAS SPOKEN... YOU'VE HEARD HIS WORDS.
YEAH, BUT, ROLAND... DO I HAFTA SAY ALL THEM TERRIBLE THINGS TO HER?
YOU WILL SAY THEM... FOR IT IS THE WAY TO END ALL SUCH SLURS.
FOOD FOR YOUR PETS
APPREHENSIVELY, A HAND REACHES OUT...
...HOLDING THE KNIFE, SHAKING EVER SO SLIGHTLY--
--BUT THEN, THE LONG INDOCTRINATION SESSIONS REPEATING THEIR LESSONS IN HIS MIND, HERBERT STRIKES VIOLENTLY.
AND THE MOVEMENTS DO NOT SUGGEST ANY HESITATION.
I GOT A MESSAGE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, MONICA LYNNE.
ALL'A YOU BETTER KEEP YOUR MOUTHS CLOSED TO THE NEWSPAPERS, YOU GOT THAT? AND THE LAW.
PLEA... PLEASE, TAKE THE KNIFE... AWAY.
PLEASE.
YOU DON'T KEEP QUIET... WE ARE GOIN' TO DRAW A LINE RIGHT ACROSS YOUR THROAT...
BE A SHAME TO SEE SUCH PRETTY LIPS SPITTIN' BLOOD... BUT YOU START TALKIN' ABOUT THE KLAN... AN' THEM INCIDENTS THE OTHER NIGHT AT THE CEMETERY WHERE YOUR SISTER LIES ROTTING IN HER GRAVE--
--AND ALL OF YOU WILL END UP LYING BESIDE HER. GOT THAT?


HE IS THE BLACK CAT, ALERT TO A THREAT IN A DOMAIN WHERE HE SHOULD NOT SUSPECT A THREAT.
REBECCA WINTHROP WATCHES HIM WHIRL WITH FELINE GRACE. SHE CANNOT SEE THE AMBER EYES THAT SEEK THE SOURCE OF DANGER--
SOUP
Bargains
--BUT SHE CAN SEE THE PANTHER'S REACTION!
REMEMBER... THERE AIN'T NO PLACE YOU CAN HIDE FROM THE KLAN.
IT IS IMMEDIATE, SUDDEN--
--AND DEVASTATING!
IN FACT, WE'RE HOLDING US A MEETIN' AT THE OLD DEVOURING SWAMP SITE TONIGHT...
...JUST TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE LYNNE FAMI...UUGGH!
IT'S NOT A MEETING YOU ARE LIKELY TO ATTEND, THEN.
IS IT?
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHERE'D HE COME FROM?
I HOPE THIS ISN'T A PURCHASE. I HAVEN'T EVEN FIGURED OUT WHAT'S A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE ITEM OR FOOD STAMP ITEM YET.

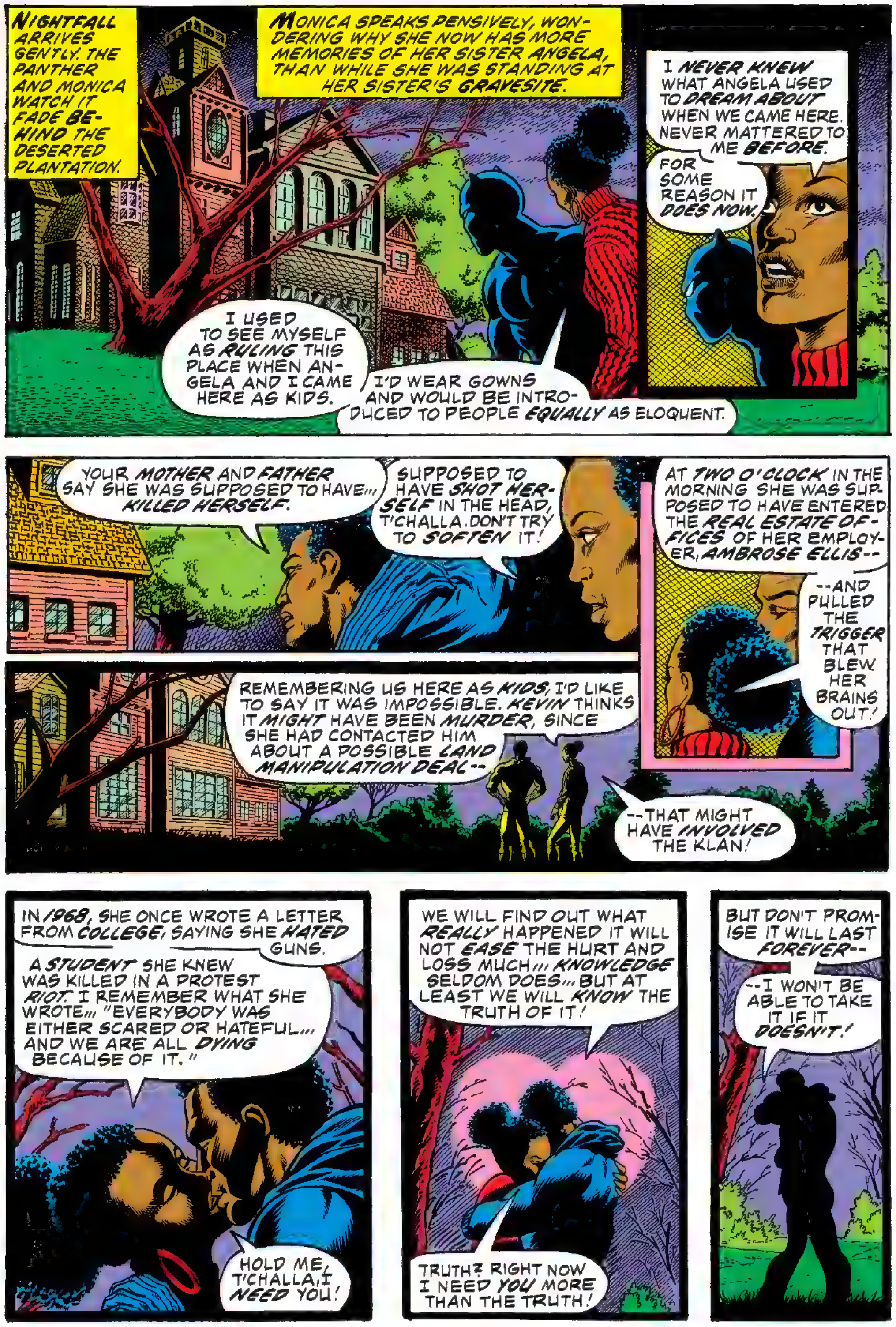
THE SECOND ATTACKER WIELDS HIS KNIFE WITH MUCH MORE PROFESSIONAL SKILL THAN HERBERT--
--BUT THE PANTHER IS GLAD THAT THE ENEMY HAS COME TO HIM. HIS MIND HAS ENVISIONED THE BLADE RIPPING UP MONICA'S FACE--
--AND THAT IMAGE, A BLOOD RED NIGHTMARE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN REALITY, CAUSES HIM TO MOVE UNERRINGLY--
--HURLING HIS SECOND OPPONENT INTO THE THIRD.
AN AVALANCHE OF FOOD BURSTS BRIGHTLY AS THE COUNTERS TOPPLE UNDER THEIR IMPACT.
THE PANTHER CROUCHES NEAR BROKEN, SLOW POURING KETCHUP BOTTLES AND BROWN, BUT NOT NOT, MUSTARD CONTAINERS.
SIRENS REACH THE SCENE AS THE QUICKER-PICKER-UPPER DISPOSABLE TOWELS FAIL TO ABSORB THE SPREADING STAINS.
POLICE
ALRIGHT, FANCY DAN, YOU KEEP YOURSELF NICE AND STILL... AN' DON'T MAKE ANY QUICK MOVES!
BUT THEN, ISN'T EVERYTHING DISPOSABLE THESE DAYS?
TOYS?
CARS?
BUILDINGS?
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS?

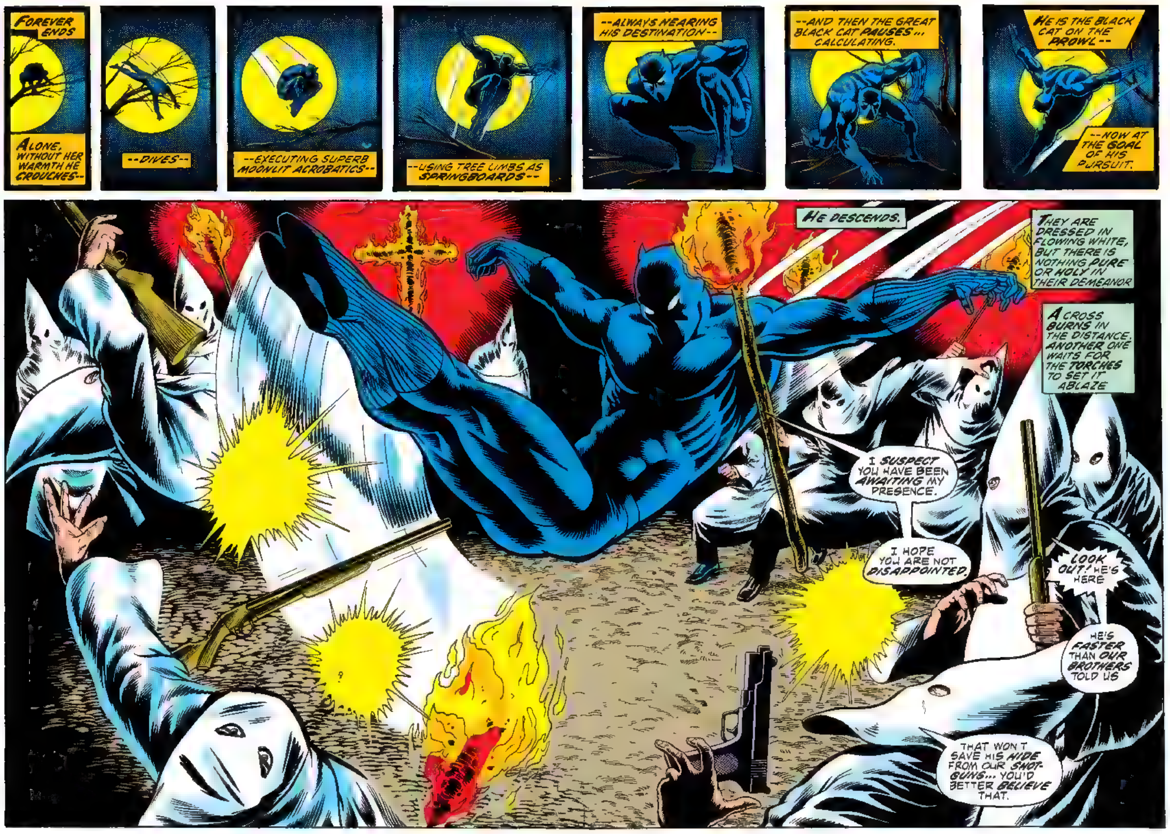

THE PANTHER STARES DOWN THE LENGTH OF NEON-LIGHTED ROOM AND SEES ONE OF HIS ATTACKERS STARTING FOR THE ELECTRONIC DOORWAYS.
HE IS NOT SURE WHICH GROUP THE MAN REPRESENTS: THE KLAN, OR THE DRAGON CIRCLE SOLDIERS.
HEY!
I JUST TOLD YOU NOT TO MOVE. NOT A MUSCLE!
YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.
YOUR QUESTIONS WOULD BE BETTER ASKED TO THE MEN WHO STARTED THIS CONFLICT.
I AM GOING AFTER THEM--NOW!
YOU AIN'T GOING NOWHERE--
--'AN YOU AIN'T GONNA HURT NOBODY ELSE. YOU AIN'T BEEN LISTENIN' TOO GOOD, MISTER, THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM!
BEANS
BEANS
THE PANTHERS EYES BURN FROM THE NEON LIGHTS, AND IT SLOWS HIM ENOUGH SO THAT HE CANNOT COMPLETELY AVOID THE THRUSTING PISTOL.
THE MUGGY SEPTEMBER DAY ERUPTS WITH SOUND, DROWNING OUT THE QUIET BACKGROUND MUSIC FROM THE STORE SPEAKERS.
THEY SEE HIM AS A THREAT, ATTACKING THEIR OWN, AND THEY GATHER AROUND HIM WITH VINDICTIVE FURY.
AFTER ALL, IT COULD HAVE BEEN THEM THAT HE ATTACKED.
I KNEW YOU WAS UP TO NO GOOD WHEN YOU COME LEAPIN' AT ME. SCARE A BODY HALF-TO-DEATH!
REBECCA WINTHROP SLASHES AT HIM WITH THE CAN OF CATFOOD. THE PANTHER DOES NOT LAUGH. IT TEARS HIS COSTUME AT THE SCALP, RIPS OPEN THE FLESH ABOVE THE EYEBROW.


THE SCAR WILL BE SLIGHT, HARDLY NOTICEABLE, BUT HE WILL CARRY IT FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THIS POLICEMAN HAS EVER HAD TO STRIKE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, REMARKABLE CONSIDERING THE PROFESSION HE HAS CHOSEN. HE IS SICKENED BY THE SOUND OF IMPACT.
WHRAK!
WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE THINK YOU ARE DOING?
STAGING YOUR OWN IMPROVISATION OF "THE OX-BOW INCIDENT"?
HE WAS TRYING TO PROTECT ME! THOSE MEN NEARLY GUTTED ME OPEN WITH KNIVES!
SHERIFF RODERICK TATE PULLS TO A SCREECHING STOP IN THE FRONT OF THE SUPER-MARKET!
POLICE
SCRREEECH!
HIS SHIRT CLINGS UNCOMFORTABLY TO HIS BACK, AND HE WONDERS HOW THE DEVIL THEY MAKE RECKLESS DRIVING LOOK SO EASY IN THOSE TELEVISION SHOWS.
INSIDE, HIS FIRST SIGHT IS OF THE PANTHER AND MONICA LYNNE... AND HE WINCES.
SHERIFF RODERICK TATE WOULD LIKE TO START HIS OWN RAMPAGE. TONIGHT, HE THINKS, WILL PROBABLY BE A GOOD NIGHT TO GO OUT AND GET RIP-ROARING DRUNK.
IF ONLY TO FORGET WHAT THE REST OF THIS DAY HAS BEEN LIKE.

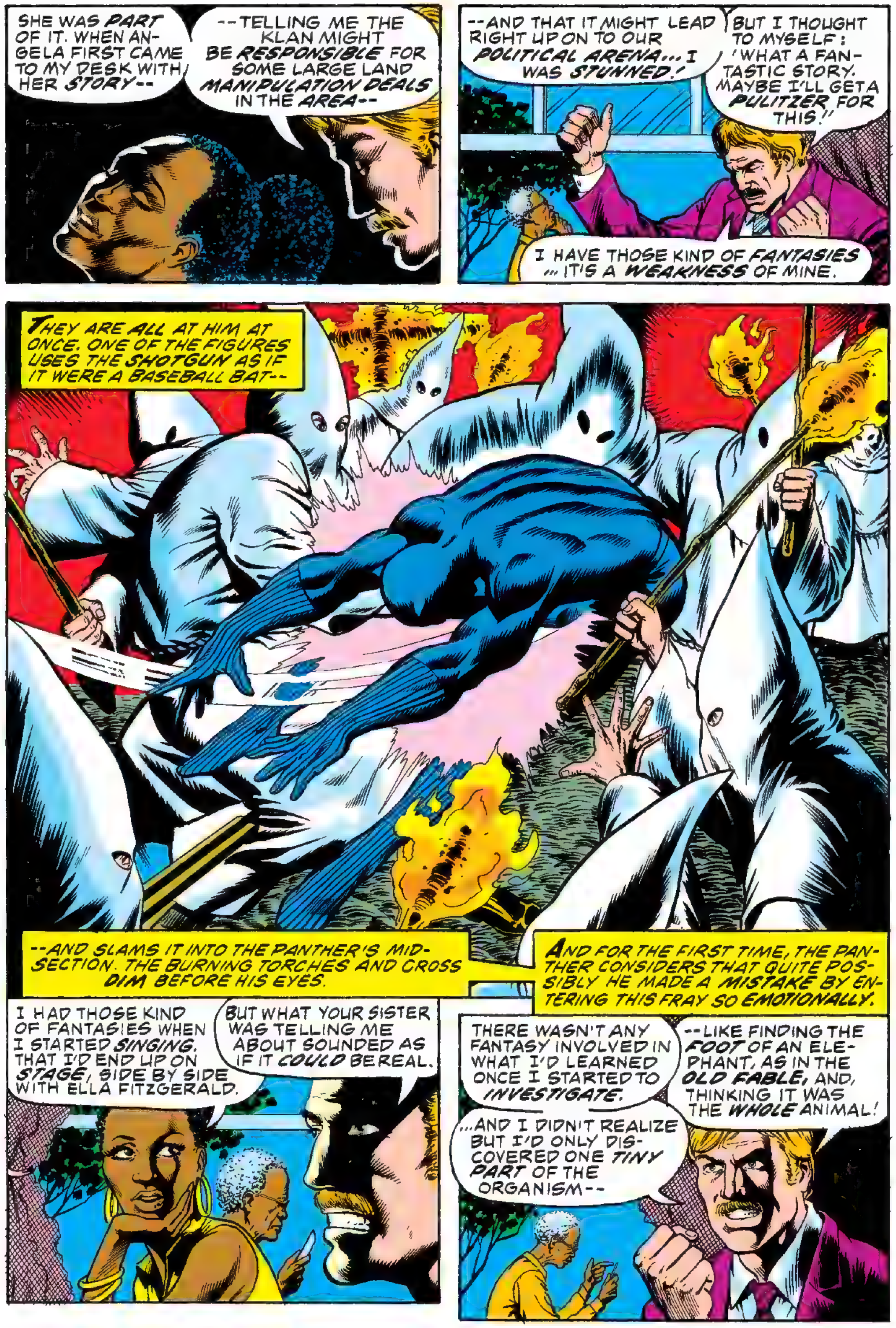
YOU GOT ANYTHING UNDER THEM HELMETS?
I MEAN OTHER THAN THEM MELONS YOU SUB-STITUTE FOR BRAINS?
WHO??... SHERIFF TATE!?
I KNOW WHO I AM... BUT I GOT MY DOUBT ABOUT YOU GUYS.
YOU BEEN KEEPIN' THIS TOWN ALIVE, MISS MONICA. IT'S NOT USUALLY JUMPIN' QUITE THIS MUCH.
IT'S BEEN MORE DEADLY THAN LIVELY FOR ME, TATE. THIS IS THE SECOND ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE SINCE I HAVE COME HOME.
IT'S THE... UH... MANNER OF DRESS YOUR... FRIEND... HAS KINDA SETS PEOPLE ABACK.
Y'KNOW, IF YOU DRESSED UP ALL IN PINK 'STEADA BLUE, THEY COULD PAIR YOU WITH PETER SELLERS. BE A NATURAL!
I'M NOT MUCH IN THE MOOD FOR HUMOR, TATE. AND I DON'T THINK T'CHALLA IS EITHER.
DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ALL OF US, MA'AM. IT'S NOT EXACTLY ALL OUR FAULTS. HEY, WHERE'RE YOU OFF TO?
REBECCA WINTHROP STANDS RIGHTEOUSLY, WEIGHING HER SMALL WEAPON OF TIN. SHE WILL GO HOME AND FEED HER NINE CATS.
PEER INTO OBLIVION... UNTIL OBLIVION COMES TO CLAIM YOU!
TUNA
GOT EVERY-THING YOU CAME FOR?
MORE THAN I CAME FOR.
YOU ARE ANGRIER THAN I AM!!
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THEY REACTED. I DIDN'T LIKE THAT HOSTIL-ITY TOWARD ME WHEN I WAS IN YOUR HOMELAND--
--AND I DON'T LIKE IT ANY BETTER HERE.

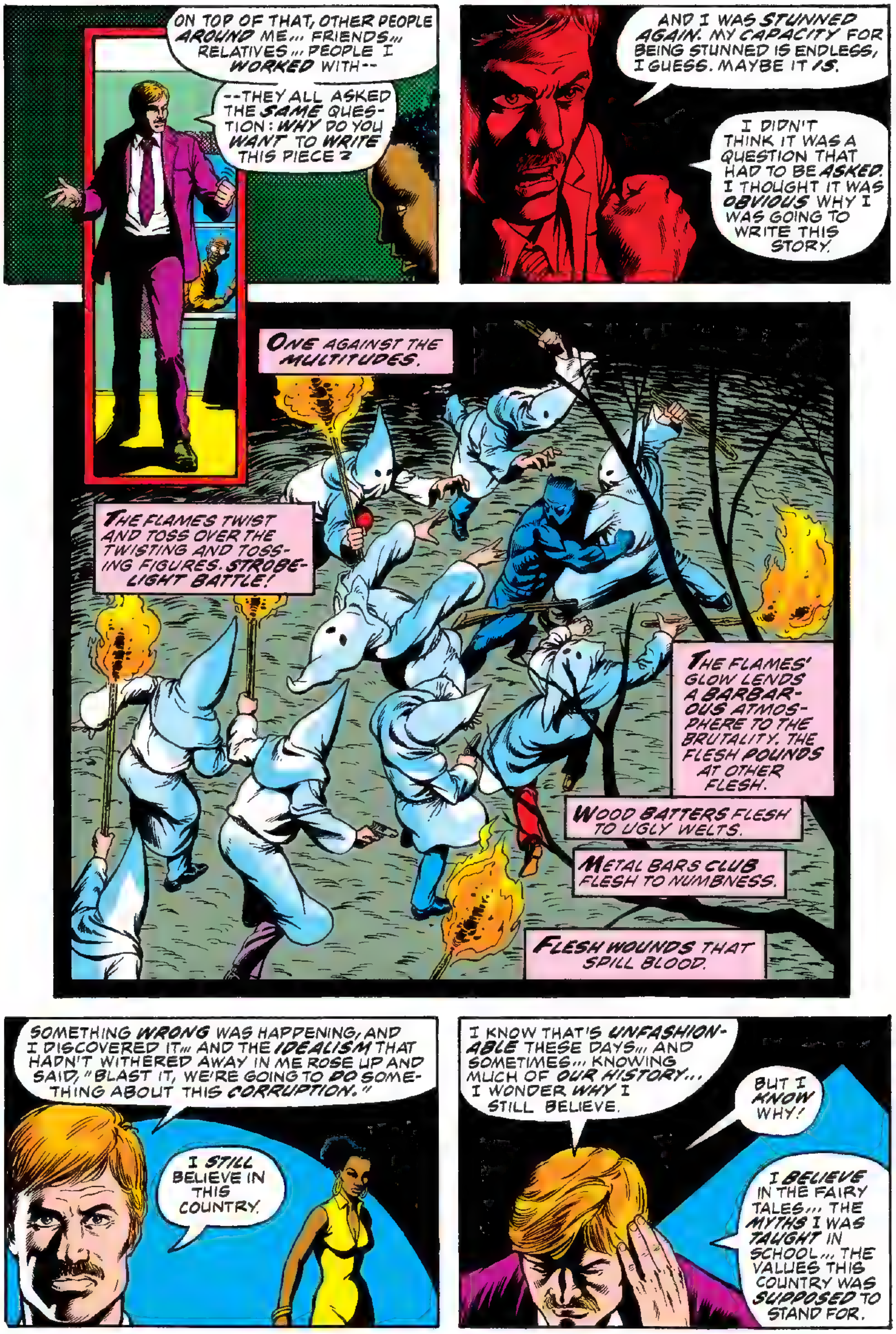
THE STORE EMPLOYEES ARE NO HAPPIER. THE SPILT FOOD COMBINES... CONGEALS... A RECIPE RUN AMOK... THE FLOOR COVERED WITH HUMPTY DUMPTY REMAINS THAT HAVE NO SOLID PARTS.
THE REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS LOVE IT. ESPECIALLY THE SOMBER ATTIRE OF THE PANTHER.
WELL, WELL. IF IT ISN'T KEVIN TRUBLOOD OF THE GEORGIA SUN. FIGHTING REPORTER IN SHINING ARMOR.
THE ARMOR'S KIND OF TARNISHED, ROD. DON'T MUCH KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE IN THESE DAYS.
HELLO, KEVIN!
ONE THING'S FOR SURE, YOU'LL MAKE EXCITING FRONT PAGE COPY.
I WOULD BE MORE INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE DRAGON CIRCLE SOLDIERS YOU HELPED MONICA AND I BRING TO SHERIFF TATE'S HEADQUARTERS A FEW NIGHTS BACK.
MORE BAD NEWS, I'M AFRAID. JEDIDIAH THORPE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED ON BAIL.
YOUR CURRENCY DOES SEEM TO PROCURE ALMOST ANYTHING, SHERIFF TATE.
IT WAS ALL DONE ACCORDING TO THE LAW. YOU GOT MY WORD ON THAT. NOT A THING I COULD DO. SOMEBODY WITH A LOT OF MONEY IS BEHIND THIS DRAGON CIRCLE.
THESE PUNKS DIDN'T SNEER AT US WHEN THEY LEFT THE WAY MOSTA THEM WOULD. THEY'RE DEDICATED TO SOMETHING ALL RIGHT.
I WOULD NOT SAY THEY HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE KLAN, THOUGH.
I DON'T THINK THE MEN WHO ATTACKED MONICA TODAY HAD ANY AFFILIATION WITH THE KLAN EITHER!
IT IS A THOUGHT WORTH CONSIDERING, SHERIFF TATE. IT PRESENTS MANY INTRIGUING SPECULATIONS.
MANY.

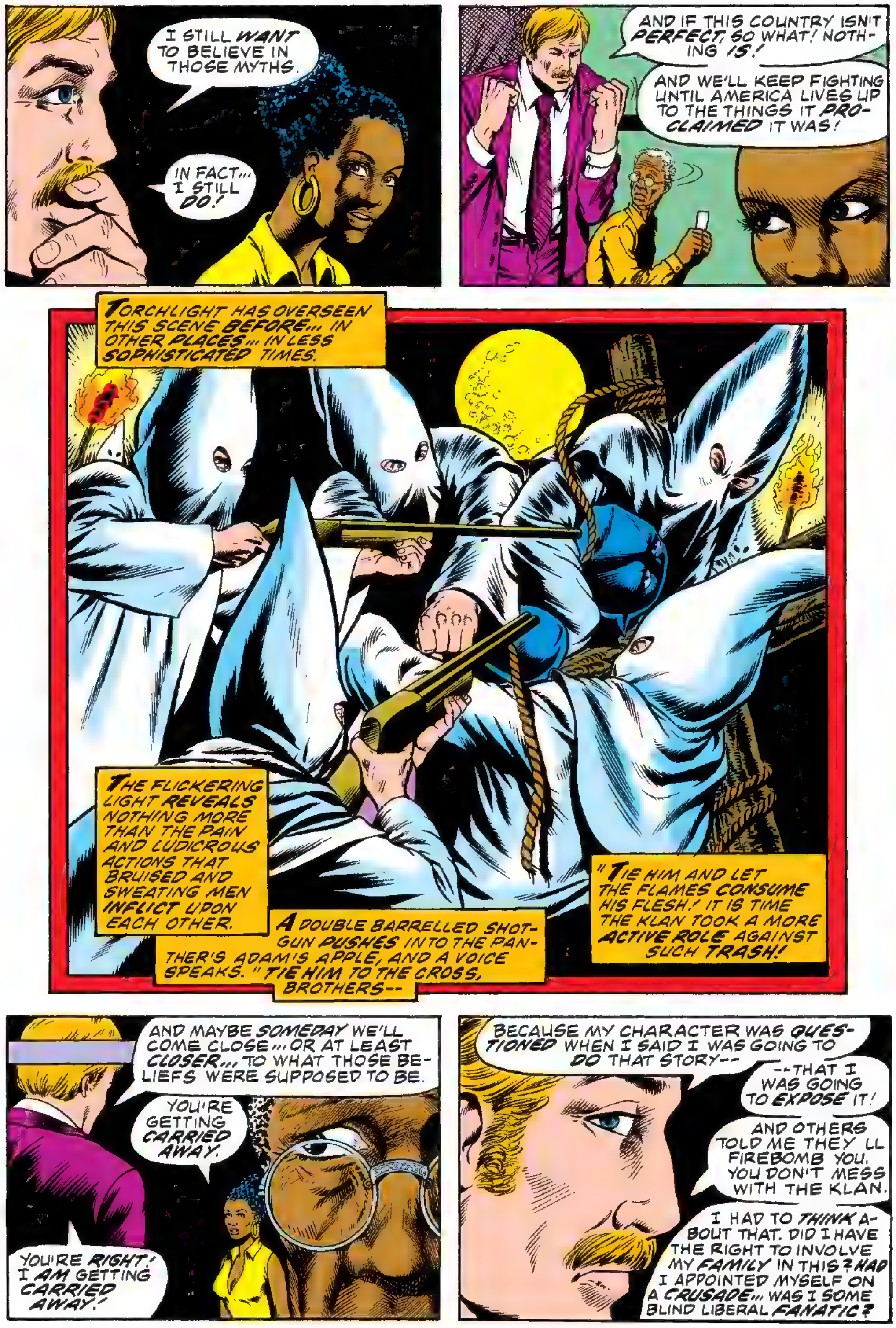

NIGHTFALL ARRIVES GENTLY. THE PANTHER AND MONICA WATCH IT FADE BEHIND THE DESERTED PLANTATION.
MONICA SPEAKS PENSIVELY, WONDERING WHY SHE NOW HAS MORE MEMORIES OF HER SISTER ANGELA, THAN WHILE SHE WAS STANDING AT HER SISTER'S GRAVESITE.
I USED TO SEE MYSELF AS RULING THIS PLACE WHEN ANGELA AND I CAME HERE AS KIDS.
I'D WEAR GOWNS AND WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO PEOPLE EQUALLY AS ELOQUENT.
I NEVER KNEW WHAT ANGELA USED TO DREAM ABOUT WHEN WE CAME HERE. NEVER MATTERED TO ME BEFORE.
FOR SOME REASON IT DOES NOW.
YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER SAY SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE... KILLED HERSELF.
SUPPOSED TO HAVE SHOT HERSELF IN THE HEAD, T'CHALLA. DON'T TRY TO SOFTEN IT!
AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE ENTERED THE REAL ESTATE OFFICES OF HER EMPLOYER, AMBROSE ELLIS--
--AND PULLED THE TRIGGER THAT BLEW HER BRAINS OUT!
REMEMBERING US HERE AS KIDS, I'D LIKE TO SAY IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE. KEVIN THINKS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MURDER, SINCE SHE HAD CONTACTED HIM ABOUT A POSSIBLE LAND MANIPULATION DEAL--
--THAT MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE KLAN!
IN 1968, SHE ONCE WROTE A LETTER FROM COLLEGE, SAYING SHE HATED GUNS.
A STUDENT SHE KNEW WAS KILLED IN A PROTEST RIOT. I REMEMBER WHAT SHE WROTE... "EVERYBODY WAS EITHER SCARED OR HATEFUL... AND WE ARE ALL DYING BECAUSE OF IT."
HOLD ME, T'CHALLA, I NEED YOU!
WE WILL FIND OUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED. IT WILL NOT EASE THE HURT AND LOSS MUCH... KNOWLEDGE SELDOM DOES... BUT AT LEAST WE WILL KNOW THE TRUTH OF IT!
TRUTH? RIGHT NOW I NEED YOU MORE THAN THE TRUTH!
BUT DON'T PROMISE IT WILL LAST FOREVER--
--I WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE IT IF IT DOESN'T!


FOREVER ENDS
ALONE, WITHOUT HER WARMTH HE CROUCHES--
--DIVES--
--EXECUTING SUPERB MOONLIT ACROBATICS--
--USING TREE LIMBS AS SPRINGBOARDS--
--ALWAYS NEARING HIS DESTINATION--
--AND THEN THE GREAT BLACK CAT PAUSES... CALCULATING.
HE IS THE BLACK CAT ON THE PROWL--
--NOW AT THE GOAL OF HIS PURSUIT.
HE DESCENDS.
THEY ARE DRESSED IN FLOWING WHITE, BUT THERE IS NOTHING PURE OR HOLY IN THEIR DEMEANOR
A CROSS BURNS IN THE DISTANCE. ANOTHER ONE WAITS FOR THE TORCHES TO SET IT ABLAZE
I SUSPECT YOU HAVE BEEN AWAITING MY PRESENCE.
I HOPE YOU ARE NOT DISAPPOINTED.
LOOK OUT! HE'S HERE
HE'S FASTER THAN OUR BROTHERS TOLD US
THAT WON'T SAVE HIS HIDE FROM OUR SHOT-GUNS... YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE THAT.

THE STEADY SOUND OF A GRANDFATHER CLOCK DOMINATES THE LYNNE HOUSEHOLD. FOREVER MIGHT END. KEVIN TRUBLOOD'S ILLUSIONS MIGHT END.
BUT THE SOUND OF THE CLOCK CONTINUES... INEXORABLY.
T'CHALLA WENT TO DEVOURING SWAMP, KEVIN.
TO CHECK IF THERE REALLY IS A KLAN MEETING THERE TONIGHT, HUH?
YEAH, THAT'S MY MAN. GOES OFF LIKE HE'S TAKING NOTHING MORE THAN A CASUAL STROLL.
THE PANTHER'S AVENGING FORM REFLECTS THE FLARING TORCHLIGHT.
AND THE COLORS SHIFT, RED AND ORANGE, AND YELLOW, OVER THE BLUE LENGTH OF HIS STRAINING BODY.
THROUGH THE SLITS IN THE WHITE HOODS, EYES EXPRESS HATRED AND FEAR. IT IS THE ONLY SIGN OF HUMANITY ABOUT THE FIGURES.
WELL, HE'S NOT TOO MUCH MORE CASUAL THAN YOUR DAD.
NEVER MIND.
EVENING, MR. LYNNE.
YOU SAY SOMETHING, SON?
WHY DO YOU WANT TO WRITE THIS PIECE ABOUT THE KLAN!?
I'M CERTAIN IT WASN'T FASCINATION WITH MY SISTER ANGELA, THAT MADE YOU FOLLOW THRU ON THE STORY.


SHE WAS PART OF IT. WHEN ANGELA FIRST CAME TO MY DESK WITH HER STORY--
--TELLING ME THE KLAN MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME LARGE LAND MANIPULATION DEALS IN THE AREA--
--AND THAT IT MIGHT LEAD RIGHT UP ON TO OUR POLITICAL ARENA... I WAS STUNNED!
BUT I THOUGHT TO MYSELF: 'WHAT A FANTASTIC STORY. MAYBE I'LL GET A PULITZER FOR THIS!'
I HAVE THOSE KIND OF FANTASIES ... IT'S A WEAKNESS OF MINE.
THEY ARE ALL AT HIM AT ONCE. ONE OF THE FIGURES USES THE SHOTGUN AS IF IT WERE A BASEBALL BAT--
--AND SLAMS IT INTO THE PANTHER'S MID-SECTION. THE BURNING TORCHES AND CROSS DIM BEFORE HIS EYES.
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE PANTHER CONSIDERS THAT QUITE POSSIBLY HE MADE A MISTAKE BY ENTERING THIS FRAY SO EMOTIONALLY.
I HAD THOSE KIND OF FANTASIES WHEN I STARTED SINGING, THAT I'D END UP ON STAGE, SIDE BY SIDE WITH ELLA FITZGERALD.
BUT WHAT YOUR SISTER WAS TELLING ME ABOUT SOUNDED AS IF IT COULD BE REAL.
THERE WASN'T ANY FANTASY INVOLVED IN WHAT I'D LEARNED ONCE I STARTED TO INVESTIGATE.
--LIKE FINDING THE FOOT OF AN ELEPHANT, AS IN THE OLD FABLE, AND, THINKING IT WAS THE WHOLE ANIMAL!
...AND I DIDN'T REALIZE BUT I'D ONLY DISCOVERED ONE TINY PART OF THE ORGANISM--


ON TOP OF THAT, OTHER PEOPLE AROUND ME... FRIENDS... RELATIVES... PEOPLE I WORKED WITH--
--THEY ALL ASKED THE SAME QUESTION: WHY DO YOU WANT TO WRITE THIS PIECE?
AND I WAS STUNNED AGAIN. MY CAPACITY FOR BEING STUNNED IS ENDLESS, I GUESS. MAYBE IT IS.
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS A QUESTION THAT HAD TO BE ASKED. I THOUGHT IT WAS OBVIOUS WHY I WAS GOING TO WRITE THIS STORY.
ONE AGAINST THE MULTITUDES.
THE FLAMES TWIST AND TOSS OVER THE TWISTING AND TOSSING FIGURES. STROBE-LIGHT BATTLE!
THE FLAMES' GLOW LENDS A BARBAROUS ATMOSPHERE TO THE BRUTALITY. THE FLESH POUNDS AT OTHER FLESH.
WOOD BATTERS FLESH TO UGLY WELTS.
METAL BARS CLUB FLESH TO NUMBNESS.
FLESH WOUNDS THAT SPILL BLOOD.
SOMETHING WRONG WAS HAPPENING, AND I DISCOVERED IT... AND THE IDEALISM THAT HADN'T WITHERED AWAY IN ME ROSE UP AND SAID, "BLAST IT, WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS CORRUPTION."
I STILL BELIEVE IN THIS COUNTRY.
I KNOW THAT'S UNFASHIONABLE THESE DAYS... AND SOMETIMES... KNOWING MUCH OF OUR HISTORY... I WONDER WHY I STILL BELIEVE.
BUT I KNOW WHY!
I BELIEVE IN THE FAIRY TALES... THE MYTHS I WAS TAUGHT IN SCHOOL... THE VALUES THIS COUNTRY WAS SUPPOSED TO STAND FOR.



I STILL WANT TO BELIEVE IN THOSE MYTHS.
IN FACT... I STILL DO!
AND IF THIS COUNTRY ISN'T PERFECT, SO WHAT! NOTHING IS!
AND WE'LL KEEP FIGHTING UNTIL AMERICA LIVES UP TO THE THINGS IT PROCLAIMED IT WAS!
TORCHLIGHT HAS OVERSEEN THIS SCENE BEFORE... IN OTHER PLACES... IN LESS SOPHISTICATED TIMES.
THE FLICKERING LIGHT REVEALS NOTHING MORE THAN THE PAIN AND LUDICROUS ACTIONS THAT BRUISED AND SWEATING MEN INFLICT UPON EACH OTHER.
A DOUBLE BARRELLED SHOTGUN PUSHES INTO THE PANTHER'S ADAM'S APPLE, AND A VOICE SPEAKS. "TIE HIM TO THE CROSS, BROTHERS--
"TIE HIM AND LET THE FLAMES CONSUME HIS FLESH! IT IS TIME THE KLAN TOOK A MORE ACTIVE ROLE AGAINST SUCH TRASH!
AND MAYBE SOMEDAY WE'LL COME CLOSE... OR AT LEAST CLOSER... TO WHAT THOSE BELIEFS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE.
YOU'RE GETTING CARRIED AWAY.
YOU'RE RIGHT! I AM GETTING CARRIED AWAY!
BECAUSE MY CHARACTER WAS QUESTIONED WHEN I SAID I WAS GOING TO DO THAT STORY--
--THAT I WAS GOING TO EXPOSE IT!
AND OTHERS TOLD ME THEY'LL FIREBOMB YOU. YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE KLAN.
I HAD TO THINK ABOUT THAT. DID I HAVE THE RIGHT TO INVOLVE MY FAMILY IN THIS? HAD I APPOINTED MYSELF ON A CRUSADE... WAS I SOME BLIND LIBERAL FANATIC?

NO, I DECIDED! I'D BEEN THREATENED! I REALIZED I WAS AFRAID TO WRITE THAT STORY.
MY FRIENDS, MY RELATIVES, MY CO-WORKERS. THEY MADE ME AFRAID TO WRITE THAT STORY. AND THEY WERE AFRAID.
AND I THOUGHT, "GOOD LORD, WHAT IS AMERICA COMING TO ?" WASN'T EVEN FREEDOM OF SPEECH, WHICH I TOOK TO INCLUDE THE WRITTEN WORD, INVIOLABLE ?
"AND THEY ASKED ME WHAT I HOPED TO CHANGE ?
"WRITE YOUR PIECE. THE KLAN'LL STILL BE HERE.
"AND THEY SAID, 'ALL THIS WILL BRING YOU IS GRIEF. THINK ON IT.
DO YOU THINK I WANT TO BE HURT ? DO YOU THINK I WANT TO LIVE IN FEAR ?
I DON'T WANT TO BE SCARED... BUT SOMEBODY... SOMEWHERE... MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
THEY MADE ME A MORAL MAN.
I CAN'T TURN AWAY. I DON'T WANT TO BE HURT, I DON'T WANT MY FAMILY HURT. I LOVE THEM VERY MUCH.
BUT I ALSO LOVE FREEDOM, AND I KNOW I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I TURNED AWAY FROM THIS AND PRETENDED IT DIDN'T EXIST.
I JUST HOPE I DON'T HAVE TO DIE... BECAUSE I BELIEVED--
--IN AMERICA!
A CROSS BURNING DARKLY... BLACKENING THE NIGHT!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

Seeing as this will be one of the last letters pages dealing with "Panther's Rage," we feel that it is fitting to include an in-depth analysis by that in-depth critic who has analyzed the Panther novel since its beginnings. So without further fanfare, let's let Rambunctious Ralph Macchio, letter correspondent supreme, take over.

Go ahead, Ralph. The stage is yours.

Dear Don and Billy,

Assessing "Panther's Rage" up to and including its penultimate chapter, issue #17, is an enormous temptation for one to become lost in the mire of extended metaphor. If art is the shorthand of reality, as I've so often thought, then perhaps the best way any artistic endeavor can be "summed up" is through simply allowing that work to react on you, and let the perceptions flow effortlessly, without the stinting straitjacket of searching for meanings or messages; for if the artist has been successful in his prime function, which is communication, then the observing participant, if he has opened his mind, need not worry that he has missed the figurative boat somewhere along the way.

There are several mutually operative antagonisms extant in "Panther's Rage" which are really at the core of the struggle in Wakanda. We have three major figures in the drama, two of whom, Killmonger and T'Challa, are present throughout most of the series prominently, and the final, Kantu, who emerges as a vital link in the climax, though is not seen with the constant regularity of the previous two. Perhaps the most important relationship in the series is between Erik Killmonger and the Black Panther. Killmonger has stated clearly on several occasions that he cares almost nothing for what the Panther has done or will be doing to extinguish his revolutionary flame. He has a zealous, single-minded determination that will allow no obstacle to stand in his way. As a counterpoint to this, is T'Challa, a man beseiged by doubts and fears which have whittled away his motivations even as we are viewing him. He has doubts about his own identity, not only as a chieftan and ruler, but as a man as well. He is a man attempting to come to intellectual grips with the basic questions of existence, only to find his emotional makeup reacting to situations with almost inexplicable passions. T'Challa is the perfect counterbalance to the awesome, monolithic determination of his human adversary, Erik Killmonger. While attempting to stem the tide of an impending revolution, T'Challa is also embarking on an odyssey of self-discovery which will ultimately lead toward an acceptance of his fears, though not necessarily a conquering of them. The age-old struggle between those who are immovable juggernauts, trampling all in their desires for power, and those who question every move they make, thus giving the appearance of weakness on the surface, while actually strengthening their internal fiber for conflict, has been played out upon the Wakandan stage under the expert choreography of Don McGregor.

We now have all the important figures, save one, aligned on the scale of conflict for figurative measurement. The missing figure is the child, Kantu. When Erik Killmonger is pushed off the precipice in the climax, he is not pushed by either the Black Panther or Kantu. He is forced over the edge by the basic id portion of the Wakanda chieftan, T'Challa, for in truth, that is what Kantu really is. T'Challa has essentially come full circle, and his final conflict with Killmonger will indeed "give our battle a sense of symmetry." T'Challa the man, has come to an understanding of things he did not possess two years ago, and this fortifies him. And it is the "Panther of old" who makes the attack upon Killmonger, still, this is not enough to defeat his adversary, something beyond confidence and retribution itself—hate, is necessary. And the ideal vessel for such a pure, primal emotion, is the very antithesis of intellectual probing and moral uncertainty, a nine-year-old child, reacting very much as T'Challa himself did when he had been given the opportunity of revenge upon the man who had killed his own father. Hate cannot be intellectualized or conceptualized, it merely exists and can only be dealt with on a primal level beyond the reach of the mind. T'Challa and Kantu are inexplicably entwined, for each is but a different side of the same coin, with each emerging dominant in response to a given situation. The Panther's rage achieved its consummation through a circular journey which took the protagonist from ignorance and adversity to recognition and response. Perhaps it could have been equally well titled: "Panther's Progress."

So many people have worked so long and hard to make this a truly memorable serial that will long stand as one of the finest achievements of the Marvel Age. But heartfelt and personal thanks must go to long-suffering Don McGregor, who had the confidence in this medium as well as his audience to attempt such an ambitious project. We all love you Don, and wish you nothing but the best as you continue to set precedents in the furthering of your illustrated novel. The "Panther's Rage" series has done more than take us into the inner workings of an African society or a royal chieftan's head, it has allowed us to follow the evolution of a rather remarkable and unique contribution to the small list of people who help ensure that popular culture will have its share of timeless achievements. Don, thanks—for everything.

Ralph Macchio
188 Wilson Drive
Cresskill, NJ 07626

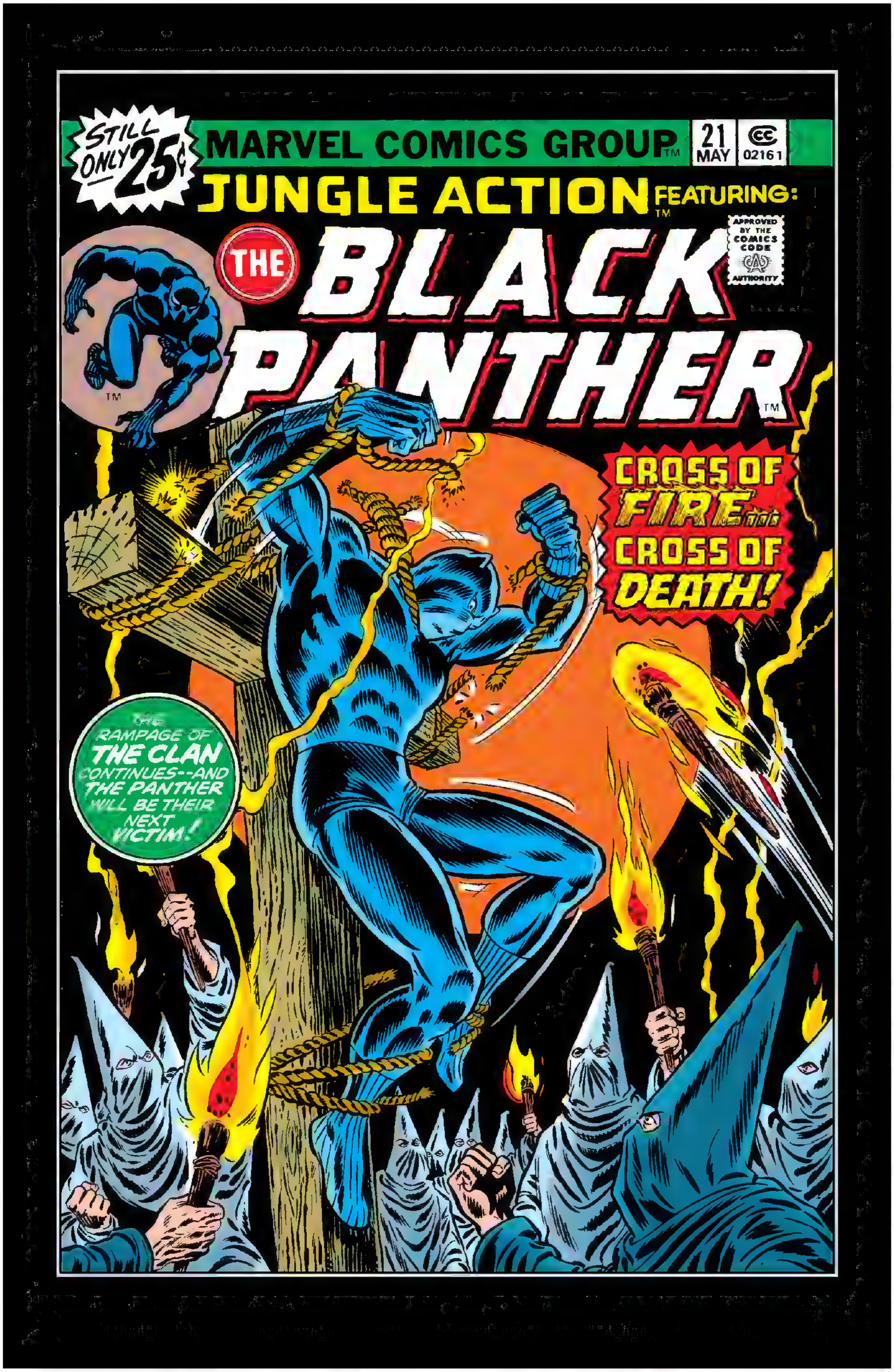
Don thanks you, Ralph, for taking the time to evaluate and write your incisive conclusions. And Don claims that he's only been long-suffering since 1975, which he says hasn't been the best century he's ever lived through.

On the serious side, Don was astounded at your insight into the progression of the Panther novel from its initial stages on through its final chapters. You detail many of the transitions in the characters, especially the Panther, and obviously understand the interactions among them.

NEXT ISSUE: "A Cross Burning Darkly, Blackening the Night!" Some of the finest Billy Graham graphics yet. And it might be a good thing they haven't yet changed our title from JUNGLE ACTION to the BLACK PANTHER, because no one is sure if our Jungle King can get himself out of this trap.

And stay with us, People, because 1976 is going to be the Panther's year. Just wait'll we introduce the merely magnificent character called Wind Eagle. And for the Bicentennial, you'll actually witness the Panther in the Reconstruction Period, fighting in the aftermath of the Civil War. How do we pull that one off? Be with us for our upcoming issues and find out.

MARVEL VALUE STAMP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MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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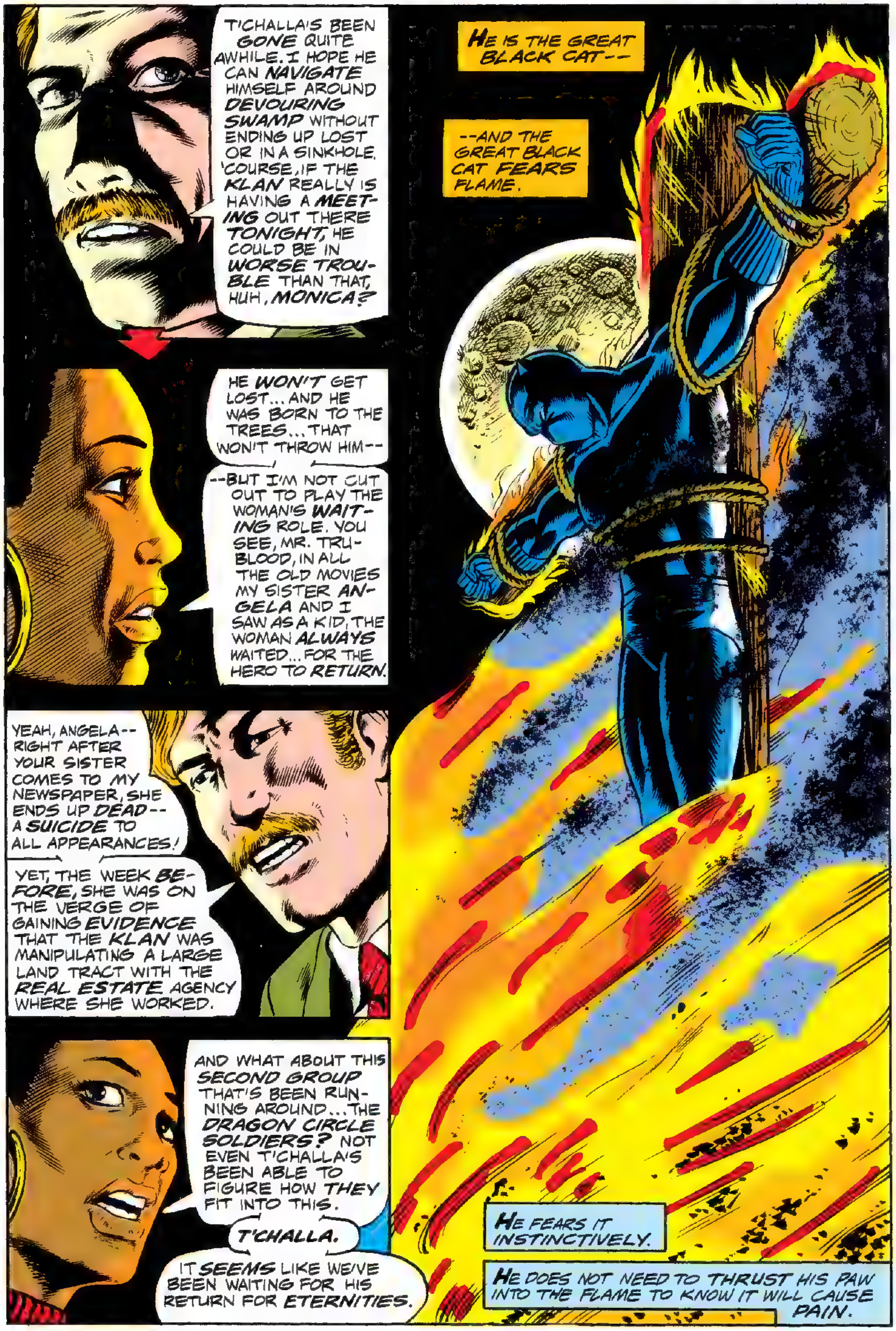
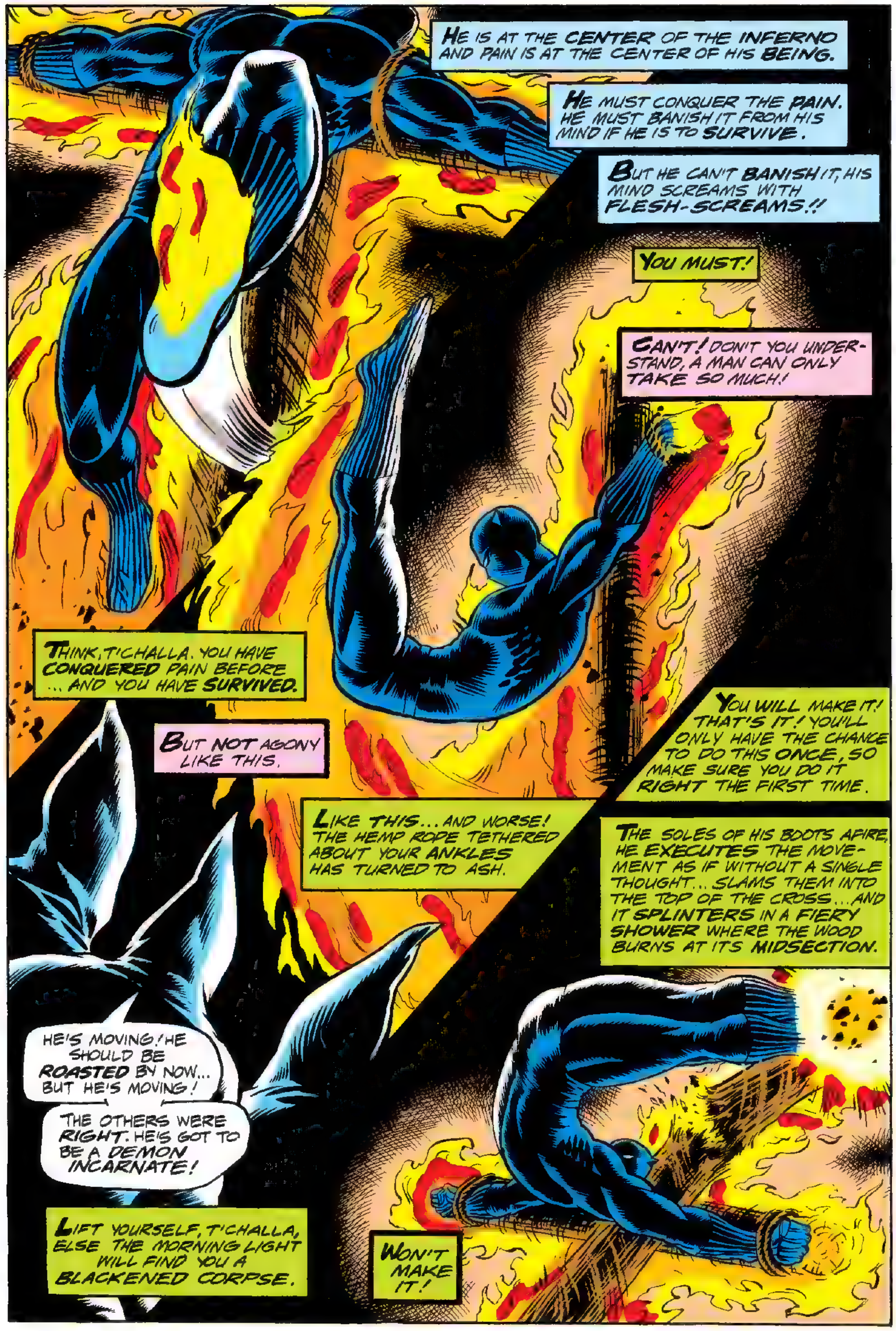
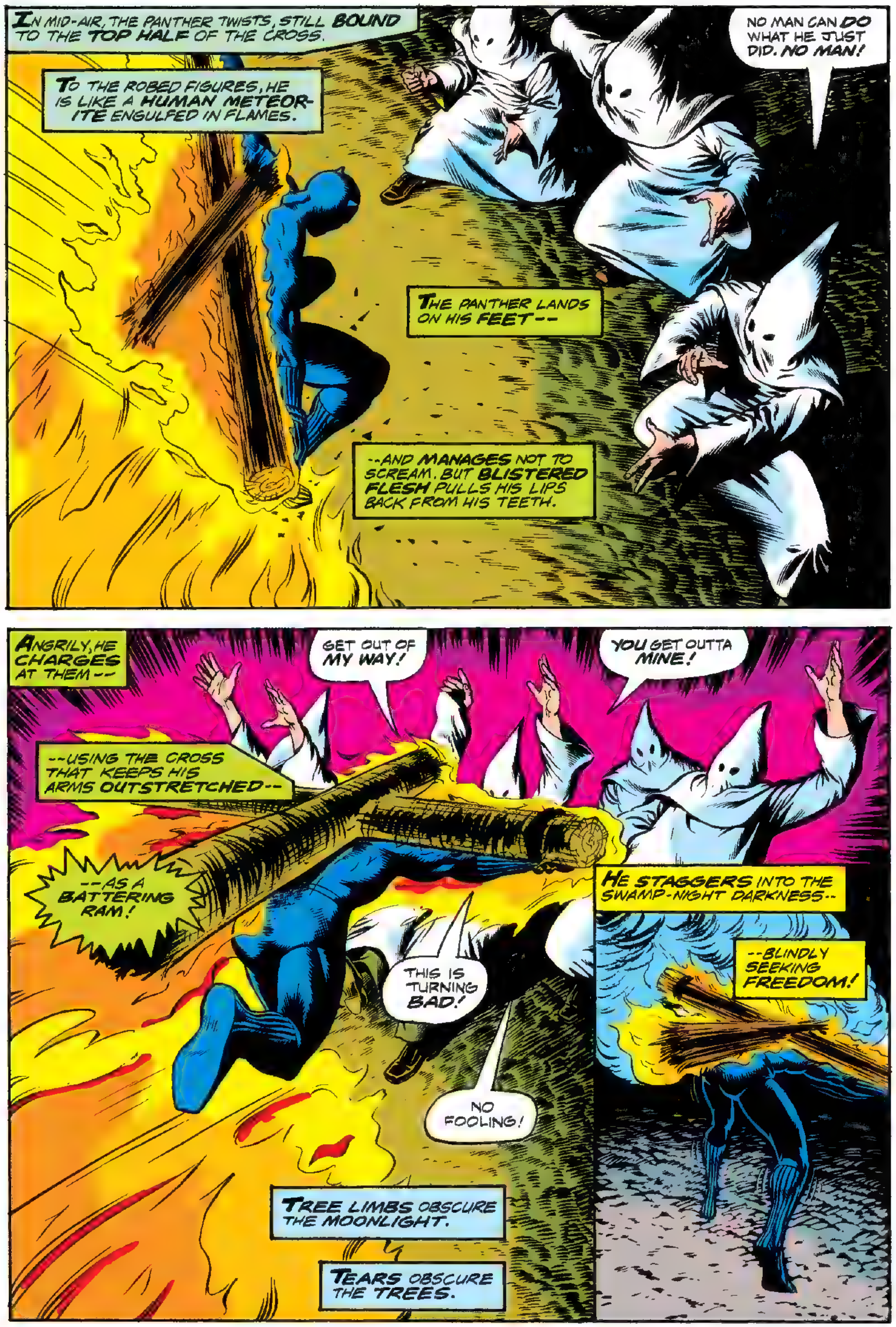
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CROSS OF FIRE... CROSS OF DEATH!
THE RAMPAGE OF THE CLAN CONTINUES--AND THE PANTHER WILL BE THEIR NEXT VICTIM!

With the sleekness of a jungle beast, the Prince of Wakanda stalks both the concrete of the city and the undergrowth of the veldt, for when danger lurks he dons the garb of the savage cat from which he gains his name!
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
A CROSS BURNING DARKLY BLACKENING the NIGHT!
THE PANTHER VS. THE KLAN!
DON McGREGOR AUTHOR
BILLY GRAHAM ARTIST
BOB McLEOD INKER
HARRY BLUMFIELD letterer
PHIL RACHELSON colorist
MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR
HE IS NOT A SYMBOLIC CHRIST!
FORGET ABOUT TURNING HIS FLESH AND BLOOD INTO SOME ESOTERIC ALLUSION TO THE PERSECUTION OF CONTEMPORARY MAN.
THIS IS THE BLACK PANTHER... KING OF THE WAKANDAS... ALSO KNOWN AS T'CHALLA.
AND HE IS MADE OF FLESH AND BLOOD. AND THE FLAMES WHICH CONSUME THE CROSS AND HIS BODY PROVE HIS HUMANITY.
AND THE DEATH-WATCHERS, DRESSED IN WHITE ROBES, REVEL AT HIS TORMENT... AND DESIRE HIS DEATH!

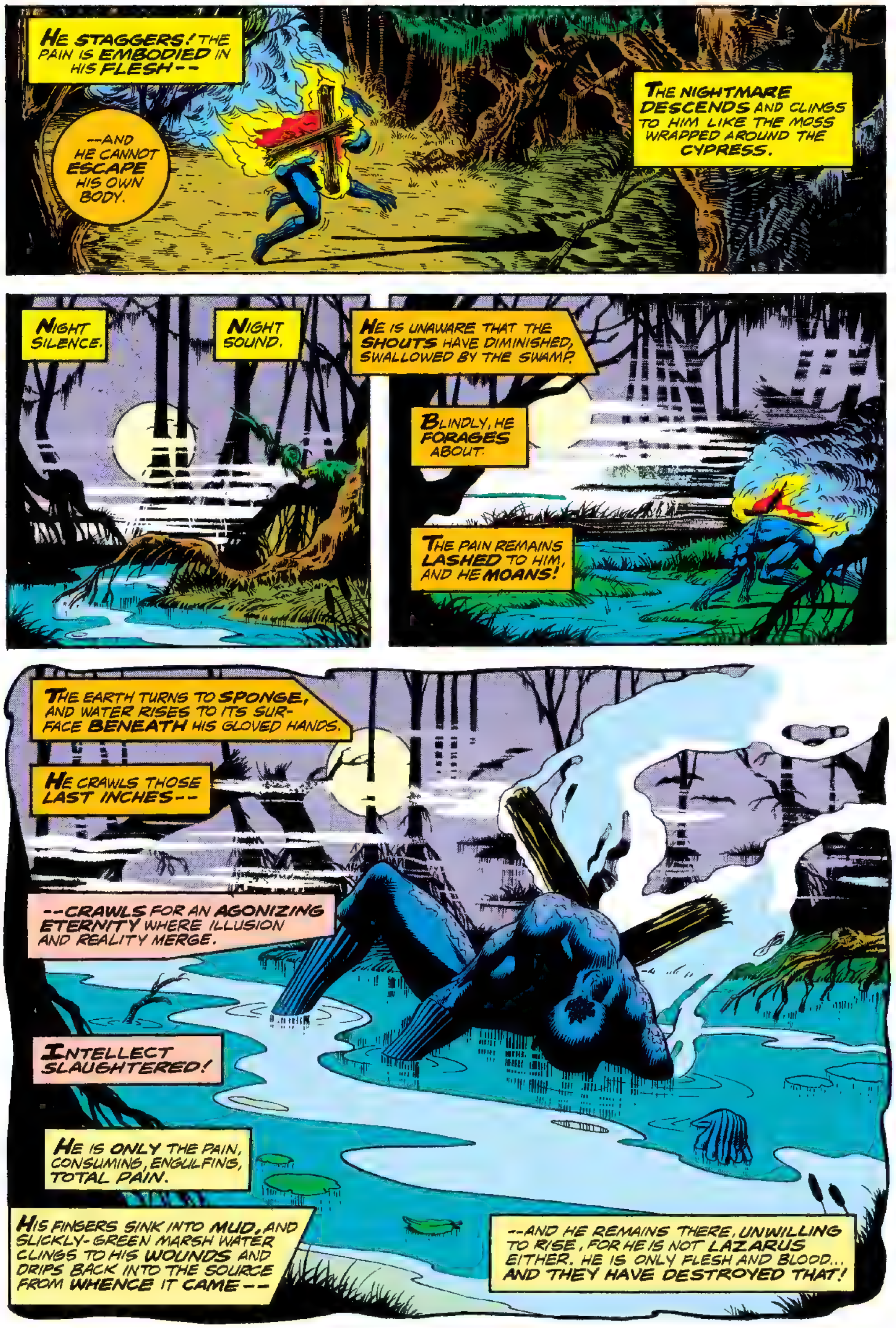

T'CHALLA'S BEEN GONE QUITE AWHILE. I HOPE HE CAN NAVIGATE HIMSELF AROUND DEVOURING SWAMP WITHOUT ENDING UP LOST OR IN A SINKHOLE. 'COURSE, IF THE KLAN REALLY IS HAVING A MEETING OUT THERE TONIGHT, HE COULD BE IN WORSE TROUBLE THAN THAT, HUH, MONICA?
HE WON'T GET LOST... AND HE WAS BORN TO THE TREES... THAT WON'T THROW HIM--
--BUT I'M NOT CUT OUT TO PLAY THE WOMAN'S WAITING ROLE. YOU SEE, MR. TRUBLOOD, IN ALL THE OLD MOVIES MY SISTER ANGELA AND I SAW AS A KID, THE WOMAN ALWAYS WAITED... FOR THE HERO TO RETURN.
YEAH, ANGELA-- RIGHT AFTER YOUR SISTER COMES TO MY NEWSPAPER, SHE ENDS UP DEAD-- A SUICIDE TO ALL APPEARANCES!
YET, THE WEEK BEFORE, SHE WAS ON THE VERGE OF GAINING EVIDENCE THAT THE KLAN WAS MANIPULATING A LARGE LAND TRACT WITH THE REAL ESTATE AGENCY WHERE SHE WORKED.
AND WHAT ABOUT THIS SECOND GROUP THAT'S BEEN RUNNING AROUND... THE DRAGON CIRCLE SOLDIERS? NOT EVEN T'CHALLA'S BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE HOW THEY FIT INTO THIS.
T'CHALLA.
IT SEEMS LIKE WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR HIS RETURN FOR ETERNITIES.
HE IS THE GREAT BLACK CAT--
--AND THE GREAT BLACK CAT FEARS FLAME.
HE FEARS IT INSTINCTIVELY.
HE DOES NOT NEED TO THRUST HIS PAW INTO THE FLAME TO KNOW IT WILL CAUSE PAIN.

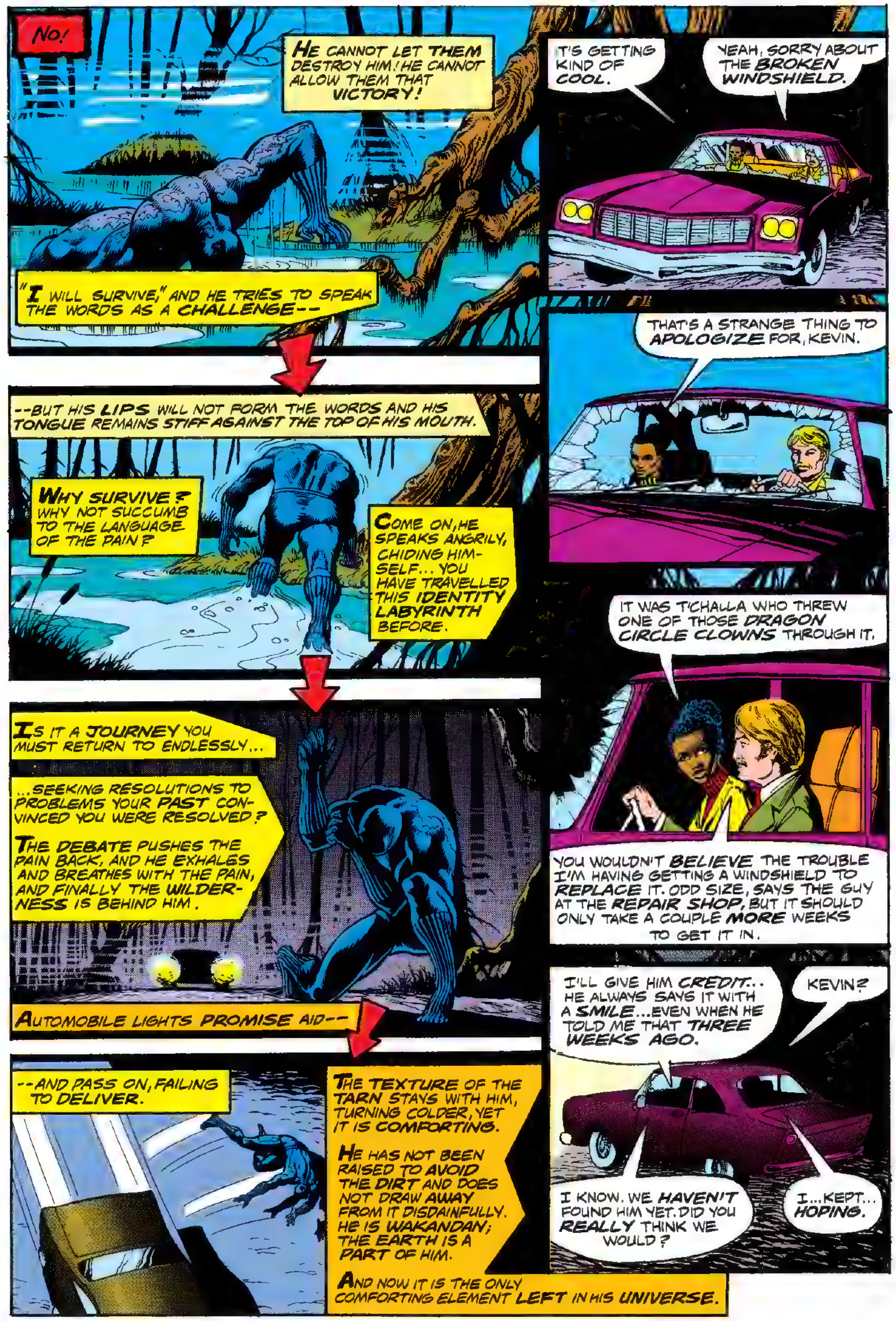
WAITING. SOMETIMES I THINK WE SPEND HALF OUR LIVES WAITING-- FOR MIRACLES!
BEFORE I BECAME KEVIN TRUBLOOD, BOY REPORTER, AND WAS JUST KEVIN TRUBLOOD, LUNATIC WITH A PASSION TO WRITE--
--MY WIFE AND I WOULD SAY: "WAIT'LL YOU MAKE IT AS A HOT-SHOT REPORTER, THAT'S WHEN WE'LL HAVE IT MADE."
MADE! HA! I MADE IT, ALL RIGHT--TO A LIFETIME OF DEADLINES AND WEARYING HOURS!
IN THE PROCESS, I LOST A LOT OF MY PASSION.
I REFOUND SOME OF IT, WHEN I DECIDED I'D FOLLOW YOUR SISTER'S STORY ALL THE WAY.
DAD.
YOU TWO THROUGH MAKIN' YOUR SPEECHES? THOUGHT YOU WERE PRACTICIN' FOR THE ORAL ROBERTS SHOW.
I'M GOING TO HAVE KEVIN DRIVE ME OUT TO DEVOURING SWAMP. SEE IF WE CAN'T FIND T'CHALLA.
WELL, I'M SURE NUTHIN' I'D SAY WOULD STOP YOU, CHILD... YOU'RE GONNA DO WHAT YOU WANT.
'SIDES, IT'LL GIVE YOUR MOTHER AND I SOME QUIET 'ROUND HERE. MAN'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY SOLITAIRE IN PEACE.
HE IS THE BLACK CAT--
--AND GIVEN ANY CHOICE THE BLACK CAT WILL FLEE THE HOLOCAUST.
BUT THERE ISN'T ANY CHOICE. CHOICE HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY.
LIPS, HIDDEN BY HOODS, SPEAK. "LOOK AT THAT, WILLYA? HIS FLESH IS GONNA BE TURNED TO BLISTERS...
...AN HE HASN'T SCREAMED ONCE!"
"HE WILL," ASSURES OTHER CLOAKED LIPS.
HE IS ALSO A MAN, AND INTELLECTUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY... THE FIRE IS DESTROYING HIM!

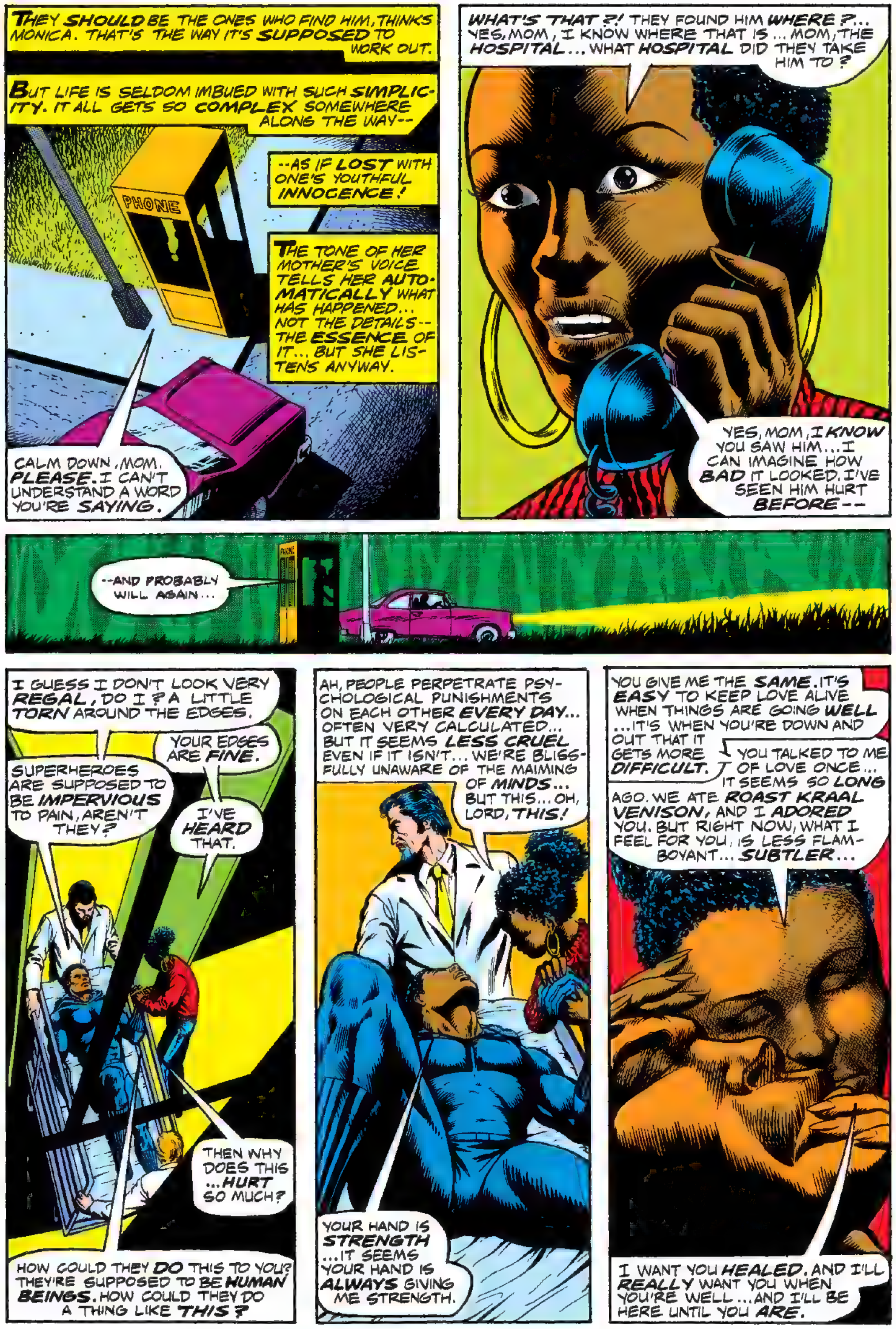

HE IS AT THE CENTER OF THE INFERNO AND PAIN IS AT THE CENTER OF HIS BEING.
HE MUST CONQUER THE PAIN. HE MUST BANISH IT FROM HIS MIND IF HE IS TO SURVIVE.
BUT HE CAN'T BANISH IT, HIS MIND SCREAMS WITH FLESH-SCREAMS!!
YOU MUST!
CAN'T! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, A MAN CAN ONLY TAKE SO MUCH!
THINK, T'CHALLA. YOU HAVE CONQUERED PAIN BEFORE ...AND YOU HAVE SURVIVED.
BUT NOT AGONY LIKE THIS.
LIKE THIS... AND WORSE! THE HEMP ROPE TETHERED ABOUT YOUR ANKLES HAS TURNED TO ASH.
YOU WILL MAKE IT! THAT'S IT! YOU'LL ONLY HAVE THE CHANCE TO DO THIS ONCE, SO MAKE SURE YOU DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.
THE SOLES OF HIS BOOTS AFIRE, HE EXECUTES THE MOVEMENT AS IF WITHOUT A SINGLE THOUGHT... SLAMS THEM INTO THE TOP OF THE CROSS... AND IT SPLINTERS IN A FIERY SHOWER WHERE THE WOOD BURNS AT ITS MIDSECTION.
HE'S MOVING! HE SHOULD BE ROASTED BY NOW... BUT HE'S MOVING!
THE OTHERS WERE RIGHT. HE'S GOT TO BE A DEMON INCARNATE!
LIFT YOURSELF, T'CHALLA, ELSE THE MORNING LIGHT WILL FIND YOU A BLACKENED CORPSE.
WON'T MAKE IT!



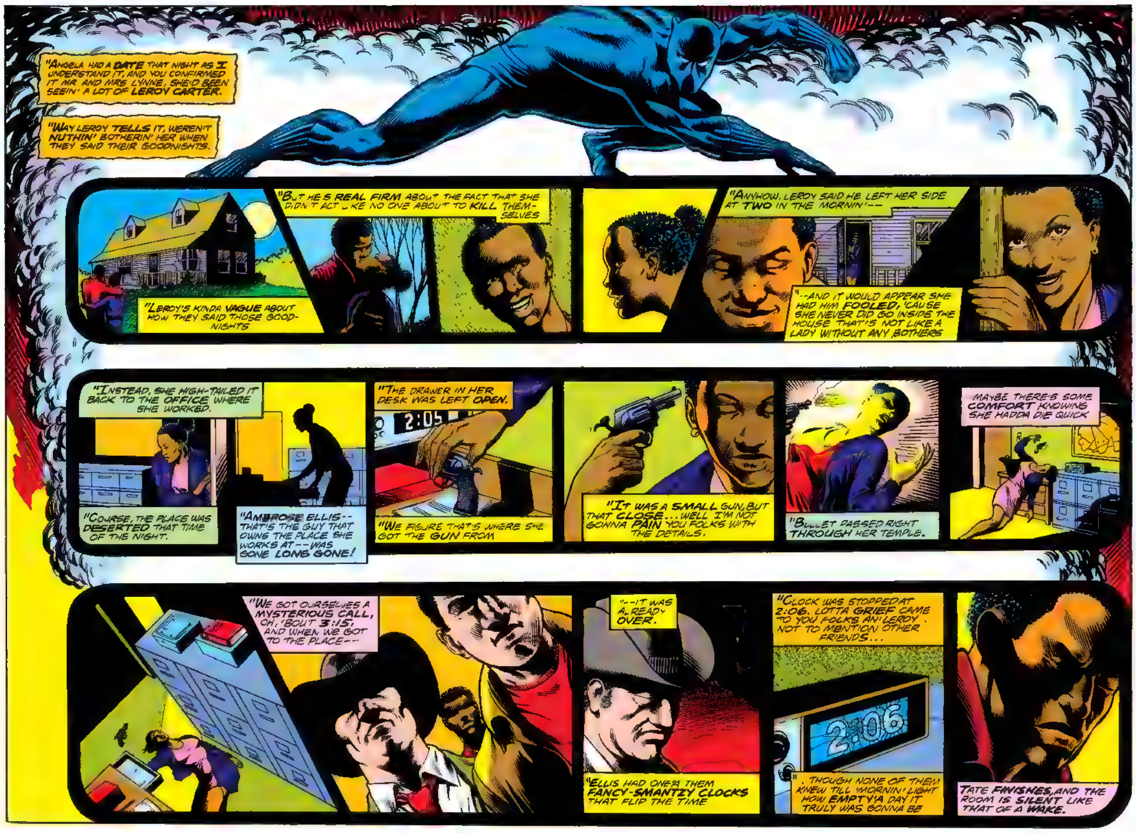
IN MID-AIR, THE PANTHER TWISTS, STILL BOUND TO THE TOP HALF OF THE CROSS.
TO THE ROBED FIGURES, HE IS LIKE A HUMAN METEOR-ITE ENGULFED IN FLAMES.
NO MAN CAN DO WHAT HE JUST DID. NO MAN!
THE PANTHER LANDS ON HIS FEET--
--AND MANAGES NOT TO SCREAM, BUT BLISTERED FLESH PULLS HIS LIPS BACK FROM HIS TEETH.
ANGRILY, HE CHARGES AT THEM--
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
YOU GET OUTTA MINE!
--USING THE CROSS THAT KEEPS HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED--
--AS A BATTERING RAM!
THIS IS TURNING BAD!
NO FOOLING!
TREE LIMBS OBSCURE THE MOONLIGHT.
TEARS OBSCURE THE TREES.
HE STAGGERS INTO THE SWAMP-NIGHT DARKNESS--
--BLINDLY SEEKING FREEDOM!


HE STAGGERS! THE PAIN IS EMBODIED IN HIS FLESH--
--AND HE CANNOT ESCAPE HIS OWN BODY.
THE NIGHTMARE DESCENDS AND CLINGS TO HIM LIKE THE MOSS WRAPPED AROUND THE CYPRESS.
NIGHT SILENCE.
NIGHT SOUND.
HE IS UNAWARE THAT THE SHOUTS HAVE DIMINISHED, SWALLOWED BY THE SWAMP.
BLINDLY, HE FORAGES ABOUT.
THE PAIN REMAINS LASHED TO HIM, AND HE MOANS!
THE EARTH TURNS TO SPONGE, AND WATER RISES TO ITS SURFACE BENEATH HIS GLOVED HANDS.
HE CRAWLS THOSE LAST INCHES--
--CRAWLS FOR AN AGONIZING ETERNITY WHERE ILLUSION AND REALITY MERGE.
INTELLECT SLAUGHTERED!
HE IS ONLY THE PAIN, CONSUMING, ENGULFING, TOTAL PAIN.
HIS FINGERS SINK INTO MUD, AND SLICKLY-GREEN MARSH WATER CLINGS TO HIS WOUNDS AND DRIPS BACK INTO THE SOURCE FROM WHENCE IT CAME--
--AND HE REMAINS THERE, UNWILLING TO RISE, FOR HE IS NOT LAZARUS EITHER. HE IS ONLY FLESH AND BLOOD... AND THEY HAVE DESTROYED THAT!

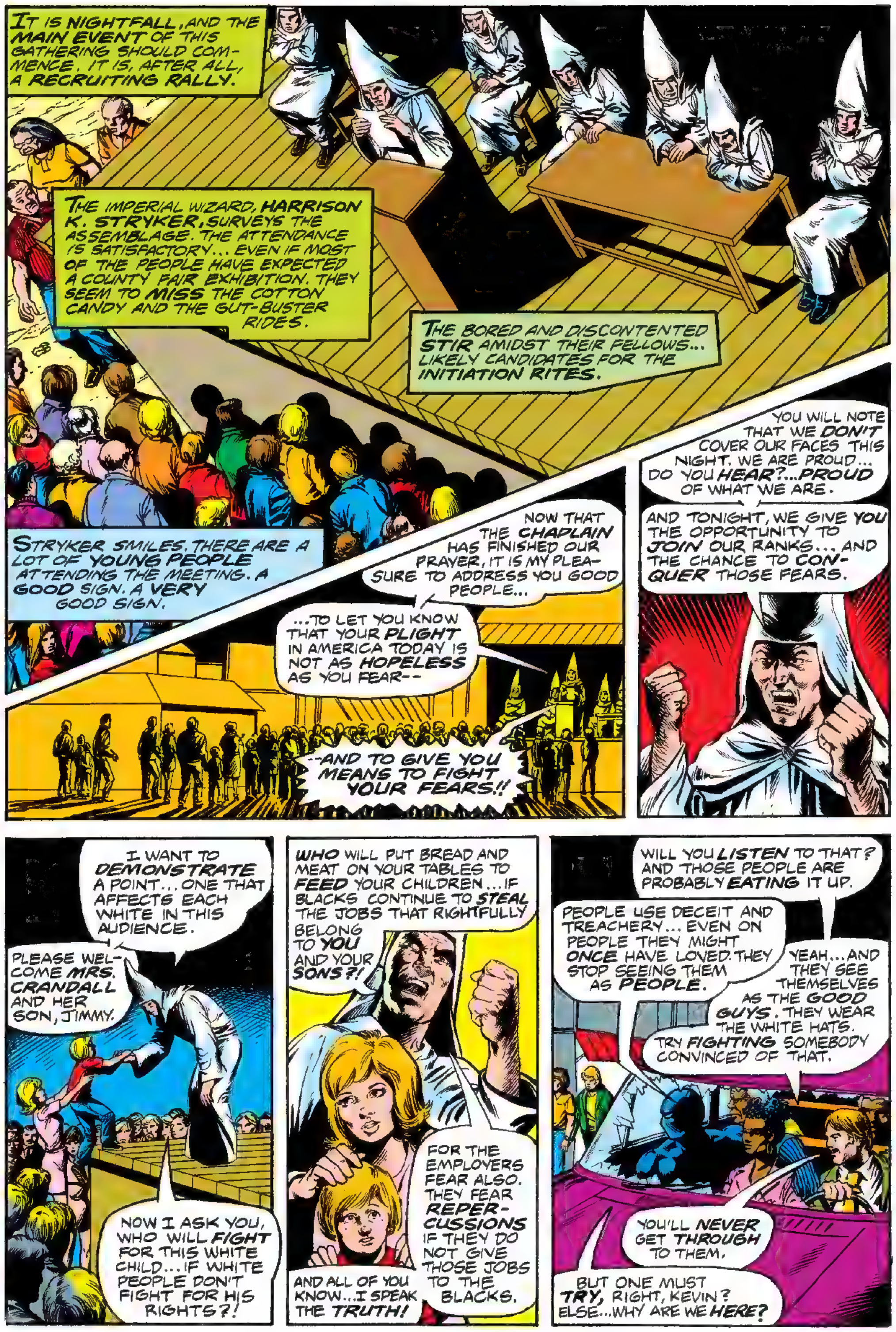

No!
HE CANNOT LET THEM DESTROY HIM! HE CANNOT ALLOW THEM THAT VICTORY!
"I WILL SURVIVE," AND HE TRIES TO SPEAK THE WORDS AS A CHALLENGE--
IT'S GETTING KIND OF COOL.
YEAH, SORRY ABOUT THE BROKEN WINDSHIELD.
THAT'S A STRANGE THING TO APOLOGIZE FOR, KEVIN.
--BUT HIS LIPS WILL NOT FORM THE WORDS AND HIS TONGUE REMAINS STIFF AGAINST THE TOP OF HIS MOUTH.
WHY SURVIVE? WHY NOT SUCCUMB TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE PAIN?
COME ON, HE SPEAKS ANGRILY, CHIDING HIMSELF... YOU HAVE TRAVELLED THIS IDENTITY LABYRINTH BEFORE.
IT WAS T'CHALLA WHO THREW ONE OF THOSE DRAGON CIRCLE CLOWNS THROUGH IT.
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE TROUBLE I'M HAVING GETTING A WINDSHIELD TO REPLACE IT. ODD SIZE, SAYS THE GUY AT THE REPAIR SHOP, BUT IT SHOULD ONLY TAKE A COUPLE MORE WEEKS TO GET IT IN.
IS IT A JOURNEY YOU MUST RETURN TO ENDLESSLY...
...SEEKING RESOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS YOUR PAST CONVINCED YOU WERE RESOLVED?
THE DEBATE PUSHES THE PAIN BACK, AND HE EXHALES AND BREATHES WITH THE PAIN, AND FINALLY THE WILDERNESS IS BEHIND HIM.
AUTOMOBILE LIGHTS PROMISE AID--
I'LL GIVE HIM CREDIT.. HE ALWAYS SAYS IT WITH A SMILE...EVEN WHEN HE TOLD ME THAT THREE WEEKS AGO.
KEVIN?
I KNOW. WE HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET. DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULD?
I...KEPT... HOPING.
--AND PASS ON, FAILING TO DELIVER.
THE TEXTURE OF THE TARN STAYS WITH HIM, TURNING COLDER, YET IT IS COMFORTING.
HE HAS NOT BEEN RAISED TO AVOID THE DIRT AND DOES NOT DRAW AWAY FROM IT DISDAINFULLY. HE IS WAKANDAN; THE EARTH IS A PART OF HIM.
AND NOW IT IS THE ONLY COMFORTING ELEMENT LEFT IN HIS UNIVERSE.


THEY SHOULD BE THE ONES WHO FIND HIM, THINKS MONICA. THAT'S THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK OUT.
BUT LIFE IS SELDOM IMBUED WITH SUCH SIMPLICITY. IT ALL GETS SO COMPLEX SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY--
--AS IF LOST WITH ONE'S YOUTHFUL INNOCENCE!
THE TONE OF HER MOTHER'S VOICE TELLS HER AUTOMATICALLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED... NOT THE DETAILS-- THE ESSENCE OF IT... BUT SHE LISTENS ANYWAY.
PHONE
CALM DOWN, MOM. PLEASE. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING.
WHAT'S THAT ?! THEY FOUND HIM WHERE ?... YES, MOM, I KNOW WHERE THAT IS... MOM, THE HOSPITAL... WHAT HOSPITAL DID THEY TAKE HIM TO ?
YES, MOM, I KNOW YOU SAW HIM... I CAN IMAGINE HOW BAD IT LOOKED. I'VE SEEN HIM HURT BEFORE--
--AND PROBABLY WILL AGAIN...
I GUESS I DON'T LOOK VERY REGAL, DO I ? A LITTLE TORN AROUND THE EDGES.
YOUR EDGES ARE FINE.
SUPERHEROES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE IMPERVIOUS TO PAIN, AREN'T THEY?
I'VE HEARD THAT.
THEN WHY DOES THIS ...HURT SO MUCH?
HOW COULD THEY DO THIS TO YOU? THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HUMAN BEINGS. HOW COULD THEY DO A THING LIKE THIS?
AH, PEOPLE PERPETRATE PSYCHOLOGICAL PUNISHMENTS ON EACH OTHER EVERY DAY... OFTEN VERY CALCULATED... BUT IT SEEMS LESS CRUEL EVEN IF IT ISN'T... WE'RE BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF THE MAIMING OF MINDS... BUT THIS... OH, LORD, THIS!
YOUR HAND IS STRENGTH ...IT SEEMS YOUR HAND IS ALWAYS GIVING ME STRENGTH.
YOU GIVE ME THE SAME. IT'S EASY TO KEEP LOVE ALIVE WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WELL ...IT'S WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT THAT IT GETS MORE DIFFICULT.
YOU TALKED TO ME OF LOVE ONCE... IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO. WE ATE ROAST KRAAL VENISON, AND I ADORED YOU. BUT RIGHT NOW, WHAT I FEEL FOR YOU IS LESS FLAMBOYANT... SUBTLER...
I WANT YOU HEALED. AND I'LL REALLY WANT YOU WHEN YOU'RE WELL... AND I'LL BE HERE UNTIL YOU ARE.

SHERIFF RODERICK TATE STUDIES THE PEOPLE GATHERED IN THE HOSPITAL. HE NEARLY SMILES AT LLOYD LYNNE WHEN HE SPOTS THE PLAYING CARDS HELD IN THE MAN'S HANDS. HE IS NOT SURE HE WOULD RECOGNIZE THE MAN WITHOUT THOSE CARDS.
YOU'RE COMING ALONG RIGHT WELL. DOCS ARE STILL TRYIN' TO FIGURE HOW YOU CAN BE MENDIN' WITHIN A COUPLE OF WEEKS' TIME. YOU GOT 'EM PUZZLED, BOY.
THERE IS A CEREMONY I UNDERGO TWICE A YEAR, SHERIFF TATE... IT IS VERY RIGOROUS... VERY PRIVATE. I HOPE YOU CAN RESPECT THAT.
SAME AS I HOPE YOU CAN RESPECT THE FACT I DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANOTHER DAUGHTER.
AIN'T BEEN CLEARED UP WHETHER OR NOT ANGELA KILLED HERSELF AS THEY SAY...
...OR WAS MURDERED AS MR. TRUBLOOD SUSPICIONS.
WE ALL HAVE TOO MUCH LOSS IN OUR LIVES, MR. LYNNE.
BUT ONE CANNOT RUN FROM THE LOSS... OR YOU END UP LOSING EVEN MORE.
THOSE'RE EASY WORDS TO SAY.
YOU ARE VERY PERCEPTIVE, MR. LYNNE--AND UNFORTUNATELY CORRECT. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HONEST GRIEF AND MARTYRISM. NEITHER IS EASY TO SURVIVE.
WHAT'D YOU SAY?
I MERELY AGREED WITH YOU.
T'CHALLA, WHAT YOU'VE SAID IS FINE... AND MAYBE EVEN IMPORTANT... BUT WHILE YOU'VE BEEN IN HERE, EVENTS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING. THE KLAN IS HOLDING A LEGITIMATE RALLY TOMORROW NIGHT.
THEN PERHAPS WE'LL ATTEND.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT.
NOW WAITAMINNIT, YOU TWO! I DON'T WANT YOU GOIN' IN THERE BUSTIN' THINGS UP. THEY GOT THEMSELVES A PERMIT, YOU GOT THAT?
NOW I'M NOT SAYIN' THERE'S A LAW THAT CAN STOP YOU FROM GOING DOWN THERE... BUT YOU ARE SURELY GONNA STIR UP A HORNET'S NEST--
--AND I'D'A THOUGHT YOU GOT STUNG ENOUGH ALREADY!
WELL, EITHER WAY, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THAT! YOU BREAK THE LAW, YOU KNOW WHAT I'LL DO WITH YOUR CARCASSES! IT'S MY UNDERSTANDIN' YOU PEOPLE WANT'A KNOW MORE ABOUT ANGELA'S DEATH, SO LET'S TALK ABOUT THAT. NOTHIN' ELSE.

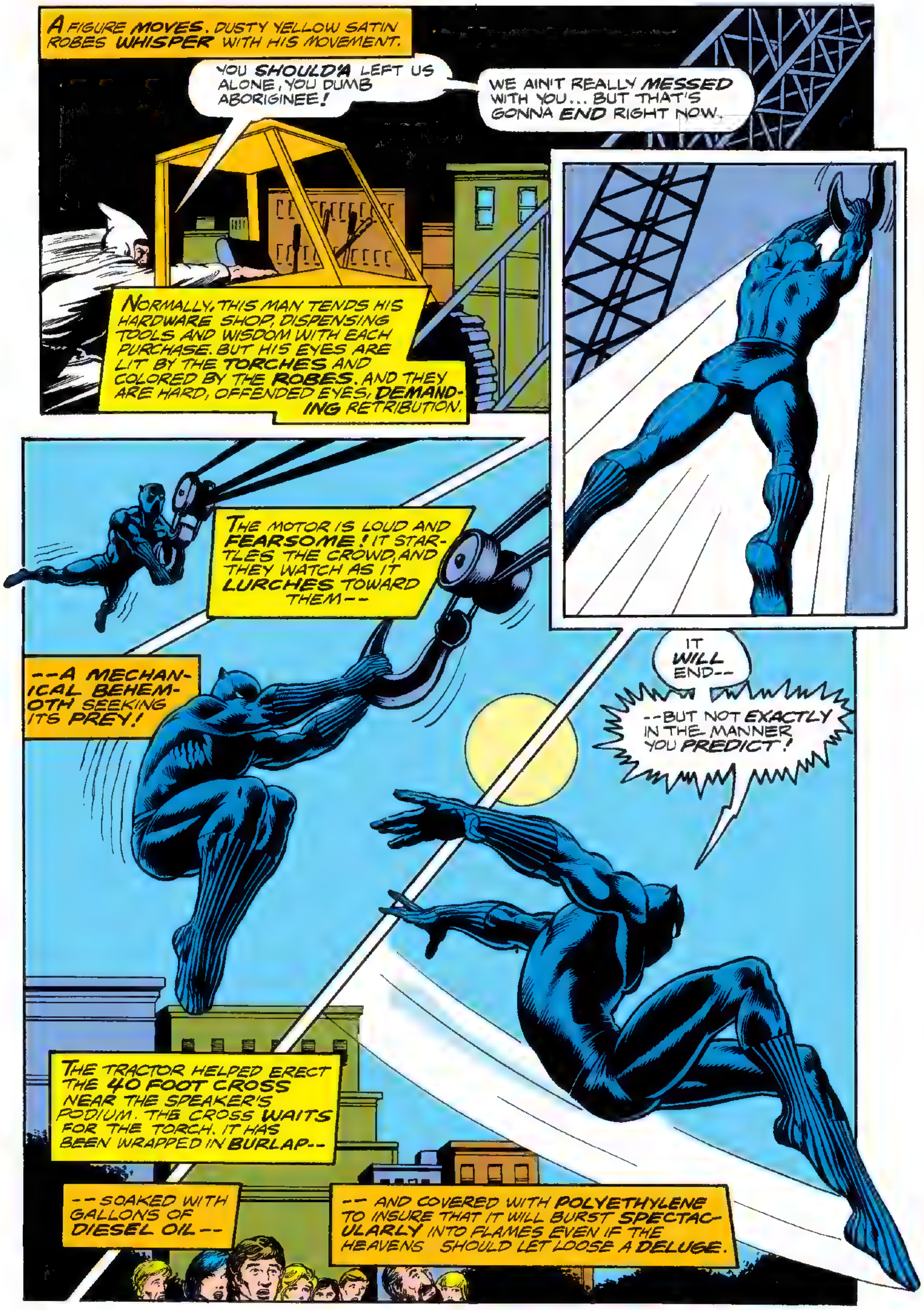


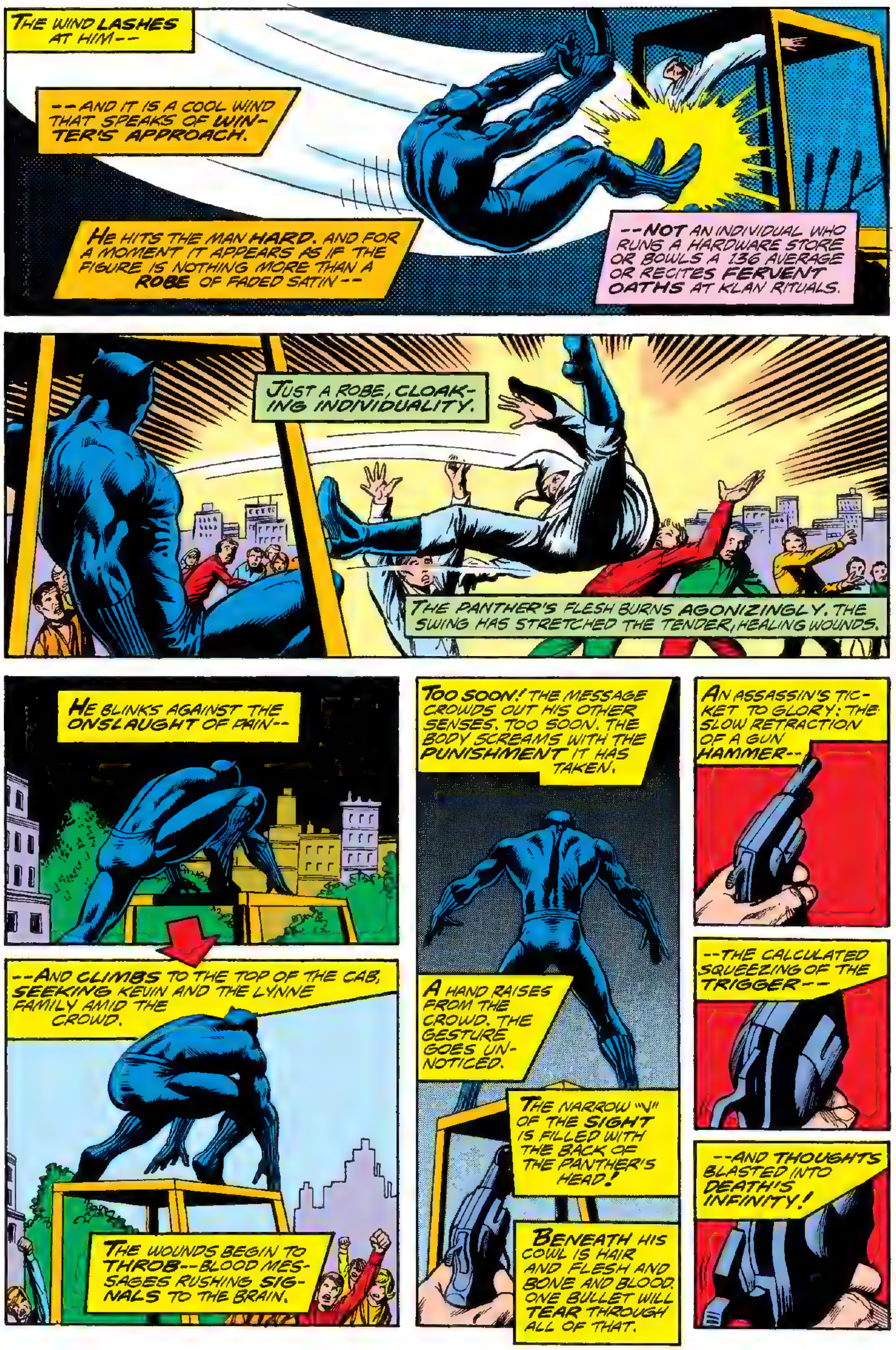
"ANGELA HAD A DATE THAT NIGHT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, AND YOU CONFIRMED IT MR AND MRS LYNNE, SHE'D BEEN SEEIN' A LOT OF LEROY CARTER.
"WAY LEROY TELLS IT, WEREN'T NUTHIN' BOTHERIN' HER WHEN THEY SAID THEIR GOODNIGHTS.
"LEROY'S KINDA VAGUE ABOUT HOW THEY SAID THOSE GOOD-NIGHTS
"BUT HE'S REAL FIRM ABOUT THE FACT THAT SHE DIDN'T ACT LIKE NO ONE ABOUT TO KILL THEM-SELVES
"ANYHOW, LEROY SAID HE LEFT HER SIDE AT TWO IN THE MORNIN'--
"--AND IT WOULD APPEAR SHE HAD HIM FOOLED, 'CAUSE SHE NEVER DID GO INSIDE THE HOUSE THAT'S NOT LIKE A LADY WITHOUT ANY BOTHERS
"INSTEAD, SHE HIGH-TAILED IT BACK TO THE OFFICE WHERE SHE WORKED.
"COURSE, THE PLACE WAS DESERTED THAT TIME OF THE NIGHT.
"AMBROSE ELLIS-- THAT'S THE GUY THAT OWNS THE PLACE SHE WORKS AT--WAS GONE LONG GONE!
"THE DRAWER IN HER DESK WAS LEFT OPEN.
2:05
"WE FIGURE THAT'S WHERE SHE GOT THE GUN FROM
"IT WAS A SMALL GUN, BUT THAT CLOSE... WELL I'M NOT GONNA PAIN YOU FOLKS WITH THE DETAILS.
"BULLET PASSED RIGHT THROUGH HER TEMPLE.
MAYBE THERE'S SOME COMFORT KNOWING SHE HADDA DIE QUICK
"WE GOT OURSELVES A MYSTERIOUS CALL, OH, 'BOUT 3:15, AND WHEN WE GOT TO THE PLACE--
"--IT WAS ALREADY OVER.
"ELLIS HAD ONE'A THEM FANCY-SMANTZY CLOCKS THAT FLIP THE TIME
"CLOCK WAS STOPPED AT 2:06. LOTTA GRIEF CAME TO YOU FOLKS AN' LEROY, NOT TO MENTION OTHER FRIENDS...
2:06
"THOUGH NONE OF THEM KNEW TILL MORNIN' LIGHT HOW EMPTY'A DAY IT TRULY WAS GONNA BE
TATE FINISHES, AND THE ROOM IS SILENT LIKE THAT OF A WAKE.


IT IS NIGHTFALL, AND THE MAIN EVENT OF THIS GATHERING SHOULD COMMENCE. IT IS, AFTER ALL, A RECRUITING RALLY.
THE IMPERIAL WIZARD, HARRISON K. STRYKER, SURVEYS THE ASSEMBLAGE. THE ATTENDANCE IS SATISFACTORY... EVEN IF MOST OF THE PEOPLE HAVE EXPECTED A COUNTY FAIR EXHIBITION. THEY SEEM TO MISS THE COTTON CANDY AND THE GUT-BUSTER RIDES.
THE BORED AND DISCONTENTED STIR AMIDST THEIR FELLOWS... LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR THE INITIATION RITES.
STRYKER SMILES. THERE ARE A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING THE MEETING. A GOOD SIGN. A VERY GOOD SIGN.
NOW THAT THE CHAPLAIN HAS FINISHED OUR PRAYER, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO ADDRESS YOU GOOD PEOPLE...
...TO LET YOU KNOW THAT YOUR PLIGHT IN AMERICA TODAY IS NOT AS HOPELESS AS YOU FEAR--
--AND TO GIVE YOU MEANS TO FIGHT YOUR FEARS!!
YOU WILL NOTE THAT WE DON'T COVER OUR FACES THIS NIGHT. WE ARE PROUD... DO YOU HEAR?...PROUD OF WHAT WE ARE.
AND TONIGHT, WE GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN OUR RANKS... AND THE CHANCE TO CONQUER THOSE FEARS.
I WANT TO DEMONSTRATE A POINT... ONE THAT AFFECTS EACH WHITE IN THIS AUDIENCE.
PLEASE WELCOME MRS. CRANDALL AND HER SON, JIMMY.
NOW I ASK YOU, WHO WILL FIGHT FOR THIS WHITE CHILD... IF WHITE PEOPLE DON'T FIGHT FOR HIS RIGHTS?!
WHO WILL PUT BREAD AND MEAT ON YOUR TABLES TO FEED YOUR CHILDREN... IF BLACKS CONTINUE TO STEAL THE JOBS THAT RIGHTFULLY BELONG TO YOU AND YOUR SONS?!
FOR THE EMPLOYERS FEAR ALSO. THEY FEAR REPERCUSSIONS IF THEY DO NOT GIVE THOSE JOBS TO THE BLACKS.
AND ALL OF YOU KNOW... I SPEAK THE TRUTH!
WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT? AND THOSE PEOPLE ARE PROBABLY EATING IT UP.
PEOPLE USE DECEIT AND TREACHERY... EVEN ON PEOPLE THEY MIGHT ONCE HAVE LOVED. THEY STOP SEEING THEM AS PEOPLE.
YEAH... AND THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS THE GOOD GUYS. THEY WEAR THE WHITE HATS. TRY FIGHTING SOMEBODY CONVINCED OF THAT.
YOU'LL NEVER GET THROUGH TO THEM.
BUT ONE MUST TRY, RIGHT, KEVIN? ELSE... WHY ARE WE HERE?

WHEN OUR MEMBERSHIP HAS THRIVED WE WILL ESTABLISH A LEGAL MOVEMENT THAT WILL RESOUND WITH OUR VOICES. AND ONCE AGAIN, WE WILL HAVE TRUE REPRESENTATION IN OUR GOVERNMENT.
OUR COUNTRY AND OUR ARTS ARE CONTROLLED BY ANTI-CHRIST JEWS WHO BRAND THE KLAN WITH IMAGES OF SLAUGHTERING THE SUPPOSEDLY OPPRESSED BLACK MAN.
THAT'S QUITE AN ACCUSATION. YOU GIVING ANYBODY THE FREEDOM TO COUNTER THAT?
ARE YOU OPEN FOR A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION?
EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT... LET ME ASK JUST ONE -- WHY DID YOU BURN THIS MAN ON A CROSS TWO WEEKS BACK?
A CROSS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A DECENT SYMBOL, LEAST THAT'S WHAT I WAS TAUGHT.
WHAT KIND OF TERROR TACTICS ARE THESE, MISTER? ARE YOU ATTEMPTING TO TURN THIS PEACEFUL RALLY INTO A RIOT WITH YOUR ABSURDLY SLANDEROUS ATTACKS?
WE HAVE NOT BURNED ANY MAN.
NO!? WHY NOT LET THESE GOOD PEOPLE JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HIS BLISTERED FLESH?
THAT SHOULD BE TESTIMONY ENOUGH!
THEY BURNED THIS MAN BECAUSE HE WAS A THREAT TO THEM. BUT IT WAS A CROSS BURNING WITHOUT LIGHT... YOU HEAR THAT?
AND WITHOUT WARMTH!
WARMTH GIVES COMFORT... IT DOESN'T TAKE AWAY HUMANITY!
AND THERE WASN'T ANY LIGHT SPILLED FROM THAT CROSS, EITHER!
LIGHT IMPLIES ILLUMINATION... TO SEE SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND BEFORE.
CAN YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?
CAN YOU?!

I'M SORRY TO RUIN YOUR "GOOD TIME," AND I KNOW THIS ISN'T ANYTHING YOU WANT TO HEAR.
I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT... THOSE BURNING CROSSES ...THEY'RE... THEY'RE A CORRUPTION... YEAH, THAT'S THE WORD I WANT...
...A CORRUPTION OF THE WORD "LIGHT"!
AND THE NIGHT'S DARK ENOUGH ALREADY WITHOUT BLACKENING IT FURTHER, PEOPLE.
YOU'RE SICK, BOY! SOMEBODY'S GONNA HAFTA DO SOMETHIN' 'BOUT ALL YOUR RANTIN' 'N' RAVIN'!
WE CAN'T HAVE YOU GOIN' 'BOUT SCARIN' THE FOLKS!
AND I CANNOT HAVE YOU MAIMING A MAN--
--MERELY BECAUSE HE HAS SPOKEN WITH PASSION!
YOU COME HERE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE... AND YOU'VE SURELY FOUND...
...IIIIT!
WE CAME HERE LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH--
--AND NOT A DISTORTION FABRICATED FROM HALF-TRUTHS.


A FIGURE MOVES. DUSTY YELLOW SATIN ROBES WHISPER WITH HIS MOVEMENT.
YOU SHOULD'A LEFT US ALONE, YOU DUMB ABORIGINEE!
WE AIN'T REALLY MESSED WITH YOU... BUT THAT'S GONNA END RIGHT NOW.
NORMALLY, THIS MAN TENDS HIS HARDWARE SHOP, DISPENSING TOOLS AND WISDOM WITH EACH PURCHASE. BUT HIS EYES ARE LIT BY THE TORCHES AND COLORED BY THE ROBES, AND THEY ARE HARD, OFFENDED EYES, DEMANDING RETRIBUTION.
THE MOTOR IS LOUD AND FEARSOME! IT STARTLES THE CROWD, AND THEY WATCH AS IT LURCHES TOWARD THEM--
--A MECHANICAL BEHEMOTH SEEKING ITS PREY!
IT WILL END--
--BUT NOT EXACTLY IN THE MANNER YOU PREDICT!
THE TRACTOR HELPED ERECT THE 40 FOOT CROSS NEAR THE SPEAKER'S PODIUM. THE CROSS WAITS FOR THE TORCH. IT HAS BEEN WRAPPED IN BURLAP--
--SOAKED WITH GALLONS OF DIESEL OIL--
--AND COVERED WITH POLYETHYLENE TO INSURE THAT IT WILL BURST SPECTACULARLY INTO FLAMES EVEN IF THE HEAVENS SHOULD LET LOOSE A DELUGE.


THE WIND LASHES AT HIM--
--AND IT IS A COOL WIND THAT SPEAKS OF WINTER'S APPROACH.
HE HITS THE MAN HARD, AND FOR A MOMENT IT APPEARS AS IF THE FIGURE IS NOTHING MORE THAN A ROBE OF FADED SATIN--
--NOT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO RUNS A HARDWARE STORE OR BOWLS A 136 AVERAGE OR RECITES FERVENT OATHS AT KLAN RITUALS.
JUST A ROBE, CLOAKING INDIVIDUALITY.
THE PANTHER'S FLESH BURNS AGONIZINGLY. THE SWING HAS STRETCHED THE TENDER, HEALING WOUNDS.
HE BLINKS AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF PAIN--
--AND CLIMBS TO THE TOP OF THE CAB, SEEKING KEVIN AND THE LYNNE FAMILY AMID THE CROWD.
THE WOUNDS BEGIN TO THROB--BLOOD MESSAGES RUSHING SIGNALS TO THE BRAIN.
TOO SOON! THE MESSAGE CROWDS OUT HIS OTHER SENSES. TOO SOON. THE BODY SCREAMS WITH THE PUNISHMENT IT HAS TAKEN.
A HAND RAISES FROM THE CROWD. THE GESTURE GOES UNNOTICED.
THE NARROW "V" OF THE SIGHT IS FILLED WITH THE BACK OF THE PANTHER'S HEAD!
BENEATH HIS COWL IS HAIR AND FLESH AND BONE AND BLOOD. ONE BULLET WILL TEAR THROUGH ALL OF THAT.
AN ASSASSIN'S TICKET TO GLORY: THE SLOW RETRACTION OF A GUN HAMMER--
--THE CALCULATED SQUEEZING OF THE TRIGGER--
--AND THOUGHTS BLASTED INTO DEATH'S INFINITY!

YOU AIN'T GONNA KILL HIM, DAMN YOU!
HE AIN'T DONE NUTHIN' THAT DESERVES KILLIN'... AN' IF YOU PEOPLE REALLY DID KILL MY LITTLE GIRL... I'LL MAKE SURE THAT'S THE LAST THING YOU TAKE FROM ME.
MR. LYNNE!
GET OUT OF HIS LINE OF FIRE!
THIS HERE'S LLOYD LYNNE SPEAKING. YOU GOT MY NAME RIGHT? LLOYD LYNNE! YOU REMEMBER IT... AND YOU REMEMBER MY LITTLE GIRL'S NAME, TOO.
THE GUN SWINGS TOWARD LLOYD'S HEAD AS THE LAST OF THE DECK OF CARDS FLUTTERS TOWARD THE EARTH. A JACK OF HEARTS ON A QUEEN OF SPADES. KINGS FILLING EMPTY SPACES. INEVITABLE LOSS CONQUERED BY A SINGLE UPTURNED CARD.
GONE. THE CARDS ARE SCATTERED.
THEY ARE TRAMPLED BENEATH THE CROWD. THE HOUSE IS BANKRUPT!
BUT ONE LAST CARD HAS YET TO BE PLAYED!
GUESS I OUGHTTA THANK YOU, HUH? YOU SAVED MY CARCASS, THAT'S FOR SURE.
NOT BEFORE YOU RISKED YOUR OWN LIFE TO SAVE MINE.
I FIGGER YOU DON'T THINK MUCH'A ME.
I THINK A GREAT DEAL OF YOU, MR. LYNNE.
DO YOU NOW? WELL... MEBBE I MEANT... I SOMETIMES DON'T THINK MUCH'A ME. BUT THAT'S NO NEVER MIND, I GUESS.
SEE, I GOT TO THINKIN' ...WATCHIN' YOU... AND LISTENING TO THIS REPORTER FELLA ALL THE TIME GIVIN' HIS SERMONS... THAT MAYBE I SHOULD'A FOUGHT MORE--
--AND MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHIN' TO WIN IF YOU DO. LEAST-WAYS, DON'T SEEM LIKE YOU'LL LOSE YOURSELF.
MR. LYNNE, YOU ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE KEVIN AND I APPEAR INELOQUENT.
NOW WHAT'S THAT S'POSED TO MEAN?
IT MEANS, WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE WITH US, MR. LYNNE.
THE ENTERTAINMENT IS OVER. THE TIRED AND DISCONTENT FADE INTO THE SEPTEMBER NIGHT--
--WAITING FOR OCTOBER'S RESURRECTION!
NEXT THE SOUL STRANGLER! AND THE BLACK PANTHER FIGHTING IN 1876! HOW DO WE MANAGE THAT? CHECK US OUT NEXT ISSUE!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

AN INITIAL REACTION TO INITIAL REACTIONS OF THE PANTHER VS. THE KLAN.

The first deluge of letters have come into our humble offices, concerning the new direction of our BLACK PANTHER series, and we feel many of them have been as stimulating as the story itself. We hope you won't shy away from us, people, 'cause your reactions and opinions are valued highly, and we'd like to see where many of you stand on our decidedly different format.

Dear People,

In JUNGLE ACTION #19 we begin a second Black Panther novel, entitled, "The Panther vs. The Klan." "Panther's Rage" was a novel about revolution–its motivations, its causes, its vehicles, its misuse and its effects on individuals, on a people and on a society. But now the setting has been changed and the very mood of the story has been altered noticeably. Gone is the lyricism, the romanticism of the lush, verdant, primitive (yet also modern) hidden world that is Wakanda. It has been replaced by the more contemporary setting of a small Georgian town. Yet there is a sort of romanticism pervading the story, that of a way of life which, as the story tells us, is slowly passing away. The lifestyle is one on which this nation was based and—to some degree, at least—as this lifestyle passes away, so do the ideals which form the foundation for this country.

Because of the change in setting a new cast of characters is needed. Tayette, Kazibe, Taku and Chandra would be out of place in this new setting.

Yet all that has transpired before has not been forgotten, the events have had an important effect on the people that participated in them.

The new characters introduced in "Blood and Sacrifices" are people striving to survive.

Kevin Trublood (an unlikely name, that) appears to be someone who believes in the dream that founded this country. But he not only believes, he acts! He fights for the ideals that he believes to be sacred, in the face of massive pressure and overwhelming force. Yet, in the mythic sense of the word, he is not a hero, for he is only a common man. When he punches someone, his hand hurts like any normal person's hand would.

Monica's parents are the last remnants of a form of life which will soon pass from the American scene. They are anachronisms, out of touch with the modern world. Yeah, but man, they're charming, they're kind, they're generous, they're sincere and they're the sort of people who are a pleasure to talk to.

Jessica Lynne is a woman who has taken care of people her entire life. Her sacrifices to her children and her husband have been bloodless for they have been sacrifices out of love.

Monica's father in his own way is also a beautiful person. He escapes into a fantasy of solitaire; yet, is solitaire so different from life? There are many ways to play both, but no matter which game you choose, you lose much more often than you win.

The setting, the characters, the tone and the mood of the series may have been changed, but the effort put into the book has not. One can almost sense the sacrifices made for this book. Oh yeah, maybe Billy's storytelling did fall down in a couple of places, but overall the artwork is enchanting. The dialogue sequence between Kevin, Monica and T'Challa on page 14 was incredibly well handled visually. Billy's interpetation of Monica's parents—and the entire sequence taking place in Monica's house, for that matter—really showed that Billy has a unique flair for portraying real people not often found in comic book art.

As you can see from the letter, I'm committed to this strip. Judging by the opening segment, "The Panther vs. the Klan" might be even more important than "Panther's Rage."

But, I just wanted to let you know that at least someone appreciates what you people are trying to do. So no matter what the obstacles, hang loose, and let your minds wander free, OK? Cause out here we really dig the journeys you take us on.

Mark Gasper
32-25 167 Street
Flushing, NY 11358

Well, this journey has just begun, and we think we have merely begun to define the perimeters of our new epic, Mark, so we're glad you're along for the ride.

By the way, if the *next* plotline for "The Panther Vs. The Klan" seems a bit weird even for Don, you can blame it on Dick Summer of WNBC radio. The Dauntless One studiously spread his research material out before him at about two in the a.m., and with all good intentions turned on the afore-mentioned Mr. Summer's nighttime show. A bit of quiet musical and lyrical insights wouldn't have been intrusive, while Don and the Panther sweated out the creative hours of that upcoming epic. But, instead of such tranquil fare, the sincere Mr. Summer had the Penthouse Pet of the Year on his show, answering phone calls from the audience at large. Don claims her voice was extremely sultry and seductive, and lured him from his diligent perusal of tomes concerning the Reconstruction Period of American History.

Don admits he was more than a bit daunted as he considered Miss Anneka's request for written profiles from her fans, and he claims he held a lengthy debate with himself (that would make Kevin Trublood appear terse) as to whether or not he should call Mr. Summer and tell him how distracting this was. We think he really wanted to talk to Anneka.

Anyhow, Don requested we print the above answer so that Peerless Production Chief John Verpoorten will understand if Don blows next issue's deadline.

You've got to admit, Big John, he keeps those excuses original.

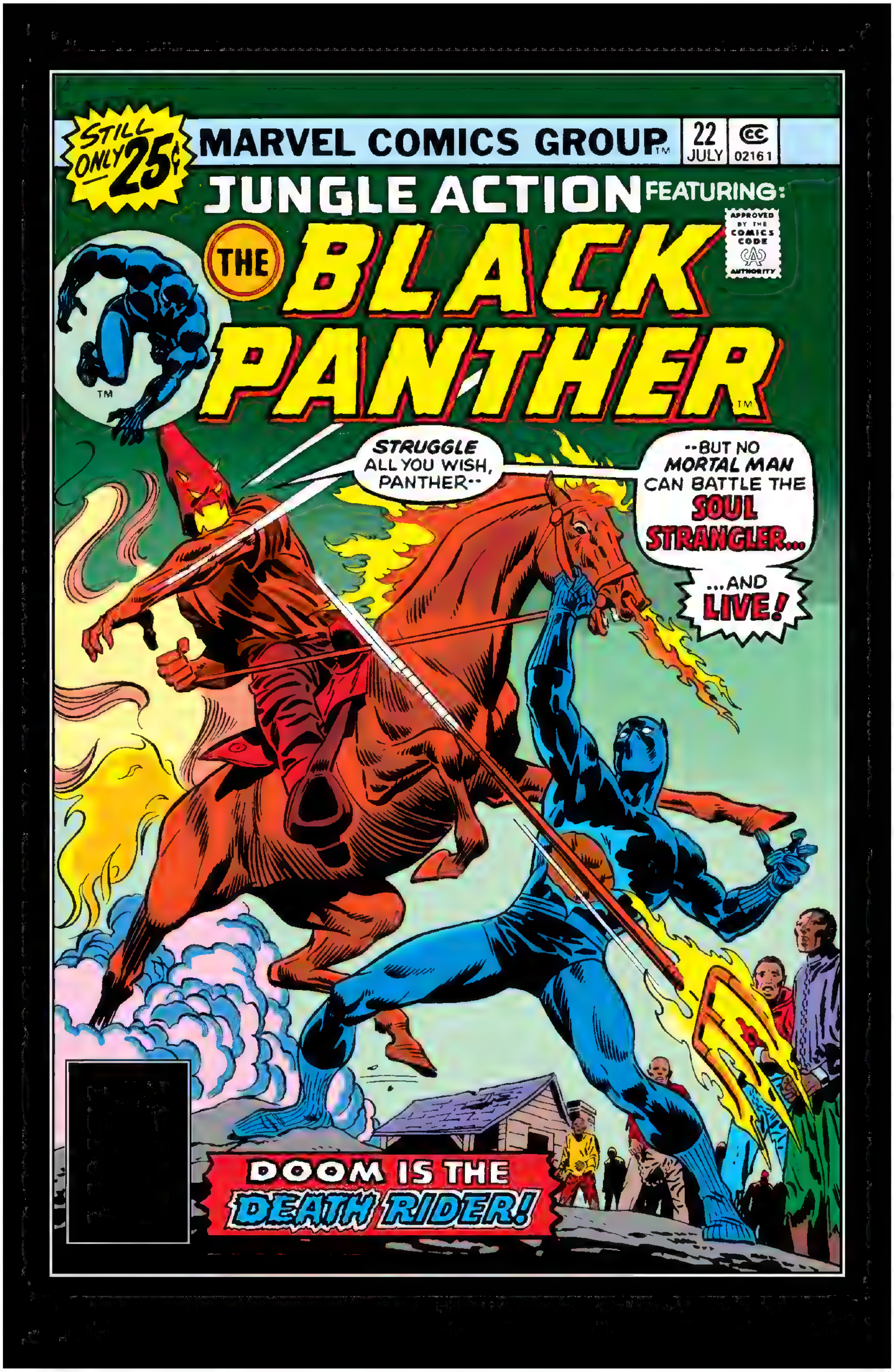
But we don't buy it at all, Mr. Summer , since we feel the Dauntless One could have turned off the radio at any time.

And as Don replies, "Can a moth fly away from the flame? Huh? Can he?"

We don't think the question requires an answer.

NEXT ISSUE: "DEATH RIDERS ON THE HORIZON!" A new villain. His name? The SOUL-STRANGLER! And he rides a mission of death during the Reconstruction Period (which is 1867, or thereabouts, if Don has done his research correctly), but he is quickly due to cross paths with our Panther-Devil. That's it, Pantherites, the King of the Wakandas faces another diabolical death-trap, this time in the most bizarre place and time ever. And hang in there, gang, because Wind-Eagle is due to take flight...and it's a trip you aren't going to want to miss.

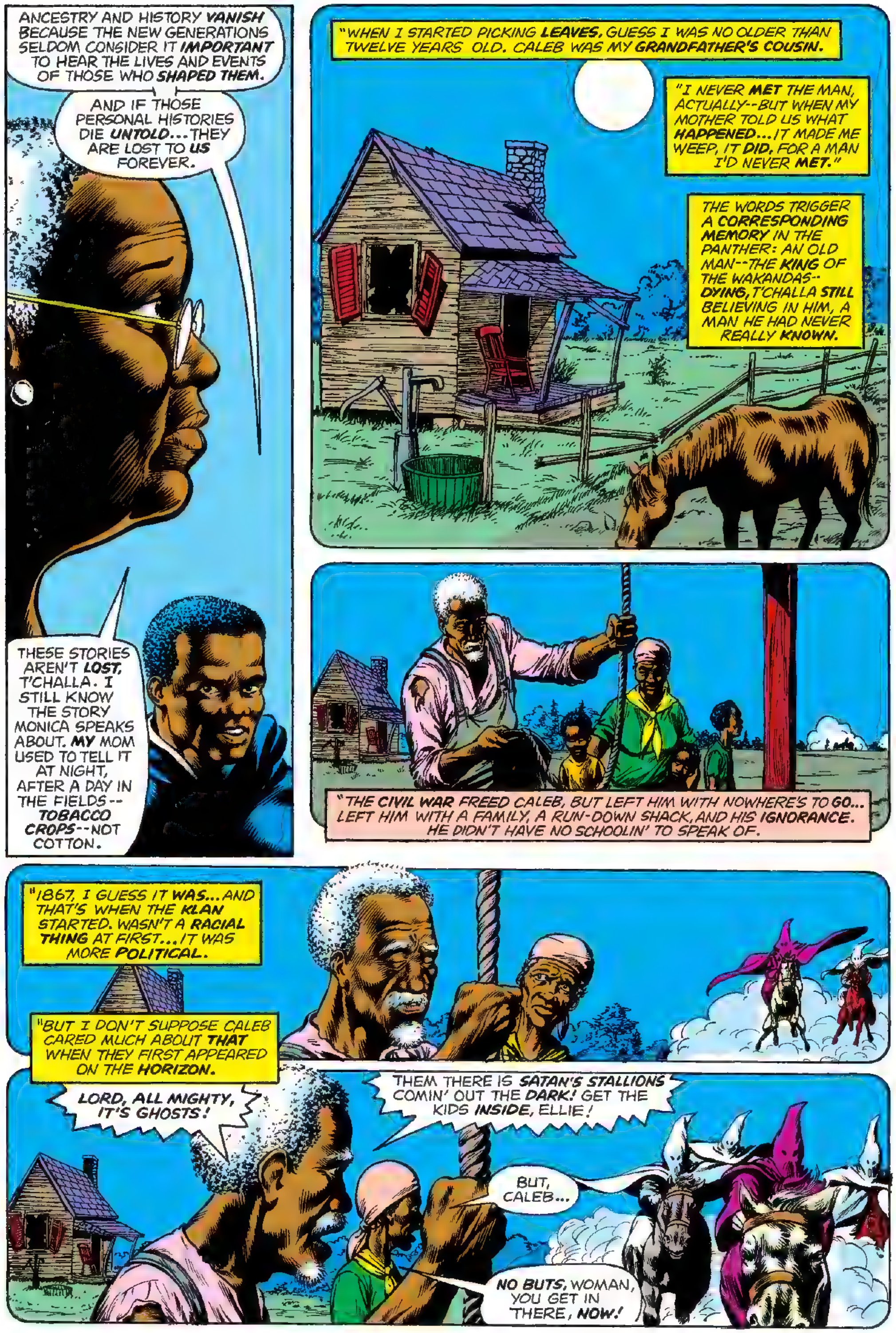
MARVEL VALUE STAMP


STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
22 JULY
02161
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
STRUGGLE ALL YOU WISH, PANTHER--
--BUT NO MORTAL MAN CAN BATTLE THE SOUL STRANGLER...
...AND LIVE!
DOOM IS THE DEATH RIDER!

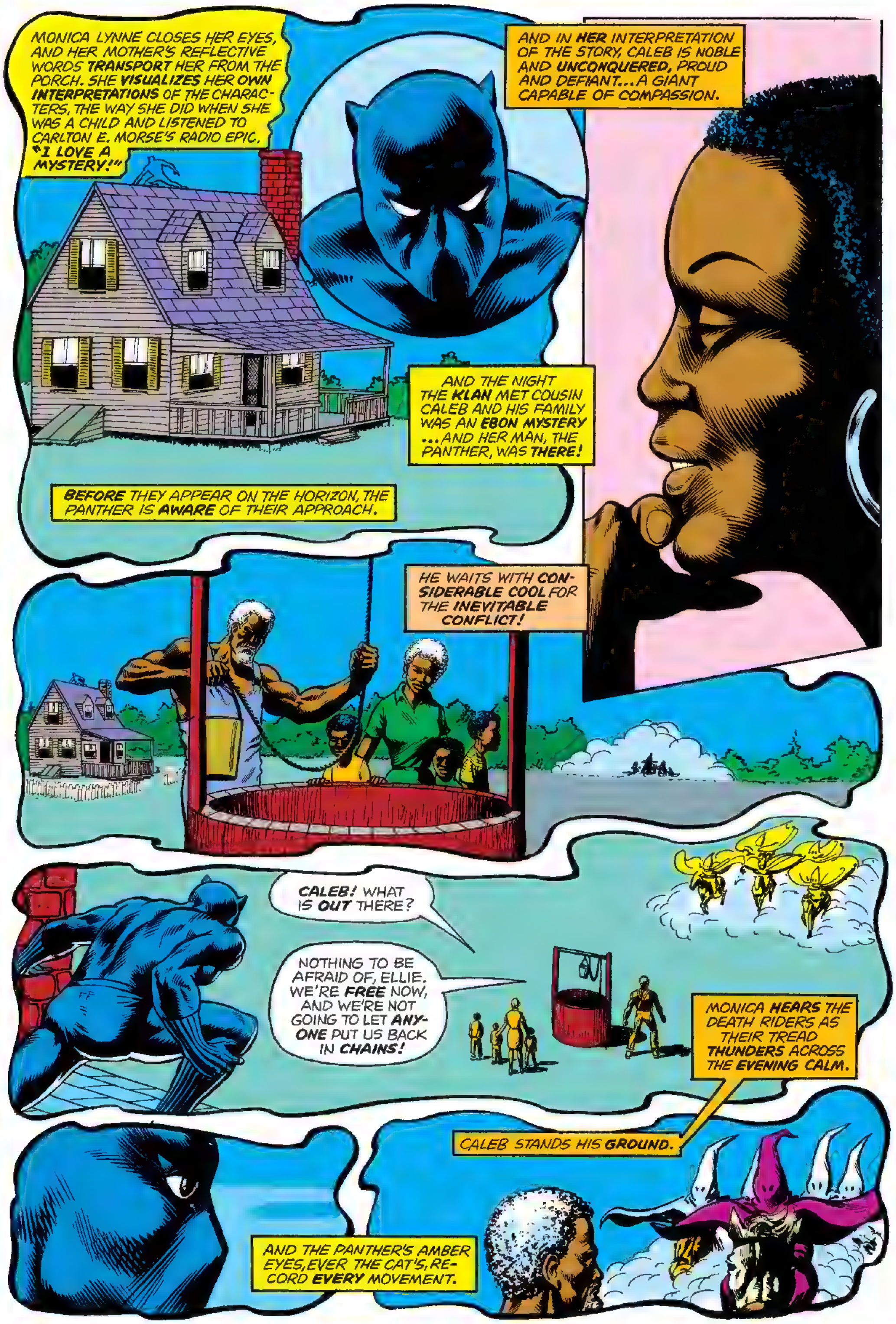
With the sleekness of a jungle beast, the Prince of Wakanda stalks both the concrete of the city and the undergrowth of the veldt, for when danger lurks he dons the garb of the savage cat from which he gains his name!
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
JV 226
THEY APPEAR NIGHTDARK AND GRACEFUL, ON THE GEORGIAN SKYLINE.
THE BLACK PANTHER, MONICA LYNNE, AND KEVIN TRUBLOOD-- FLYING A WAKANDAN SONAR GLIDER.
IT COMES TO A STOP, HOVERING, ALMOST MYSTICALLY, OVER THE LYNNE HOUSEHOLD.
THERE ARE GHOSTLY IMAGES OF OTHER FIGURES ON THE HORIZON. DEATH RIDERS RIDING DOWN THE NIGHT... YOU MIGHT NOT SEE THEM, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY NEVER EXISTED! OR THAT THEY NEVER AFFECTED YOUR LIFE!
GOOD EVENING, MR. LYNNE.
HOPE I DIDN'T STARTLE YOU.
NEAR GAVE ME A FIT. DO YOU HAFTA MAKE A PRODUCTION OUTTA EVERYTHING?
EXAMINE YOURSELF, HORATIO, AND YOU MAY BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THEIR ANCIENT TRACKS. THEY LEAVE A TRAIL OF DISTORTED HISTORY THAT HAS LEFT SUBTLE SCARS OF GUILT OR ANGER--
--OR, PERHAPS, BOTH!
WRITER DON McGREGOR
PENCILLERS BILLY GRAHAM & RICH BUCKLER
INKERS B. McLEOD & J. MOONEY
LETTERER I. WATANABE
COLORIST H. PALEY
EDITOR MARV WOLFMAN
DEATH RIDERS ON THE HORIZON
THE PANTHER VERSUS THE KLAN

MRS. LYNNE, IT HAS BEEN AN EXHILARATING NIGHT... AND YOU MAKE IT MORE SO.
NOW ISN'T THAT SOMETHING, LLOYD? MERCY, I HAVEN'T SEEN A MAN KISS A LADY'S HAND SINCE THOSE 1940 MOVIES.
BE BETTER IF'N HE TOOK OFF THE MASK, IF'N YOU ASK ME.
PAY NO ATTENTION TO LLOYD, T'CHALLA... HE'S ALWAYS A BIT UPSET WHEN SOMEONE DISTURBS HIS GAME OF SOLITAIRE.
THAT IS A FACT I HAVE COME TO NOTE.
WONDER HOW MANY U.F.O. CALLS SHERIFF RODERICK TATE IS GOING TO RECEIVE TONIGHT?
IT WON'T LEAVE HIM IN A GOOD HUMOR COME MORNING.
T'CHALLA, THAT AIRCRAFT IS... WELL, IT'S INCREDIBLE, THAT'S WHAT IT IS!
I CAN STILL FEEL THE WIND STINGING MY FLESH... LORD, IT'S LIKE BEING A KID AGAIN!
I REMEMBER-- I WON'T TELL YOU HOW LONG AGO THIS WAS-- THE FIRST TIME I CLIMBED ONTO A MOTORCYCLE AND SAW THE ROAD RACING AWAY INCHES BENEATH MY FEET.
HI. HAVE WE MET BEFORE?
FREEDOM BECAME AN EMOTION THAT DAY... RATHER THAN AN ABSTRACT WORD WHOSE DEFINITION COULD BE DEBATED.
I THINK DAD'S RIGHT... I THINK YOU OUGHT TO TAKE OFF THE MASK.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT, T'CHALLA?
I'M SORRY, KEVIN... WERE YOU SAYING SOMETHING?

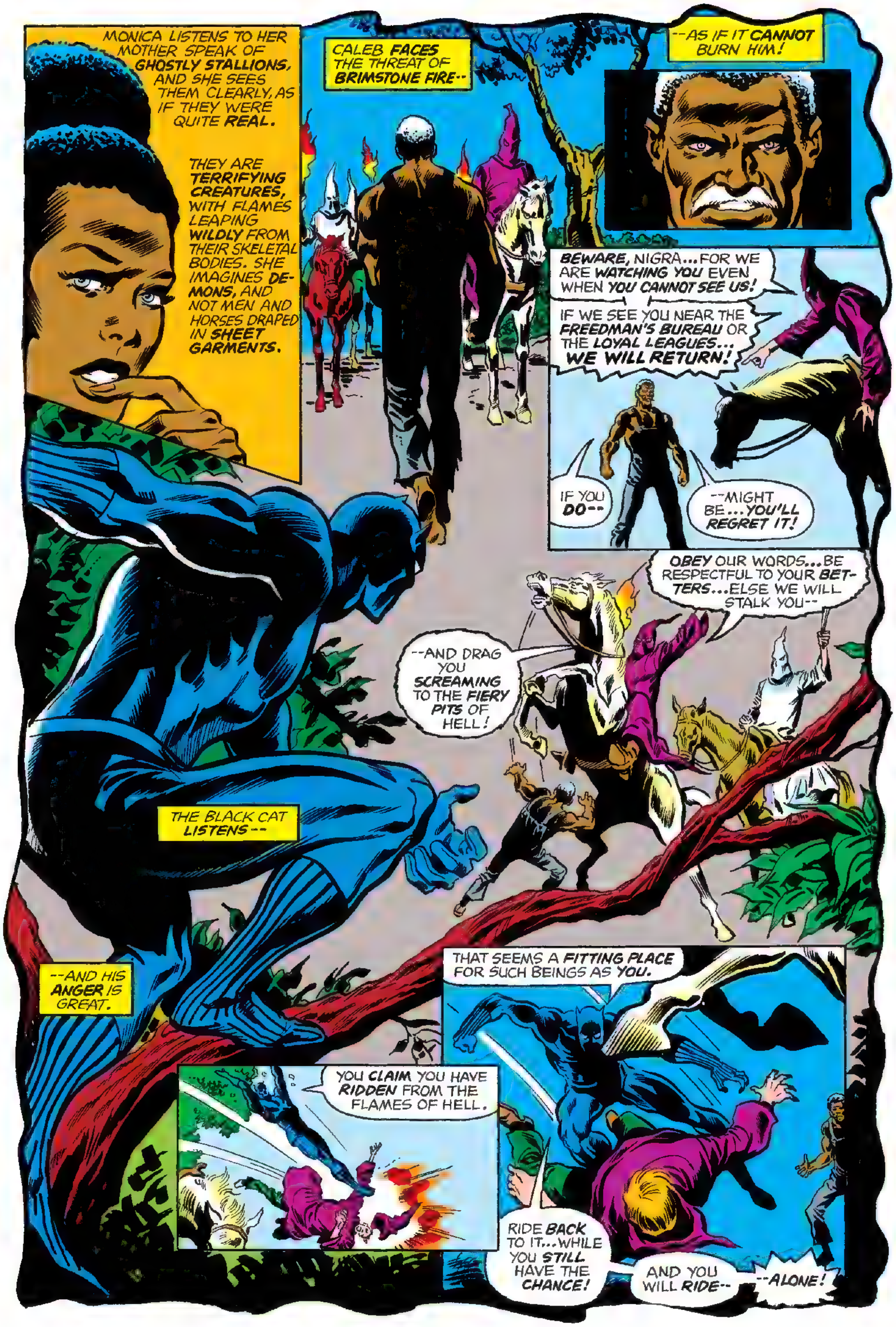
YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR MASK OFF FOR THIS... STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB PIE ...FRESH FROM THE OVEN.
I HAVE THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION IT WILL BE WORTH THE EFFORT.
21, 22, 23... WHERE'S THAT BLAMED JACK OF DIAMONDS... AIN'T SEEN IT, YET.
I REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO COME OUT ON THE PORCH IN THE SUMMER, MOM... SEEMS LIKE WE DID THAT EVERY SUMMER OF MY CHILDHOOD--
--AND ANGELA'S.
AND THE WHOLE FAMILY WOULD BE HERE... THAT'S WHEN DAD PLAYED HORSE-SHOES AS WELL AS SOLITAIRE... AND FOR THAT DAY, THIS WAS ALL THE WORLD THAT EVER WAS--
--AND ALL THE WORLD THAT WAS NEEDED.
35, 36, 37... STILL AIN'T FOUND IT!
LONG TIME BACK NOW, DAUGHTER.
WE DON'T GET TOGETHER MUCH, ANYMORE. I GUESS THINGS ARE IMPROVING IN THE WORLD--LEASTWAYS, THAT'S WHAT I KEEP HEARING--BUT THOSE WERE GOOD DAYS, IN THEIR OWN WAY.
44, 45... HEY, HEY! OKAY, THERE YOU ARE, YOU RED JESTER, YOU!
AND YOU USED TO TELL STORIES THAT GRANDMA HAD TOLD YOU.
WHILE WE WERE KIDS, T'CHALLA, MY SISTER ANGELA AND I AND THE REST OF US LITTLE BRATS COVERED IN DIRT, ATE BURNT MARSHMALLOWS.
AND ONE TIME, ANGELA'S MARSHMALLOW WAS IN FLAMES AND DROPPED OFF OF HER STICK AND SHE GRABBED IT LIKE SHE WAS LOSING THE GREATEST TREASURE IN THE WORLD--
--AND IT BURNED HER HAND SO BADLY, SHE HAD A HUGE BLISTER FOR A MONTH! YOU PUT BUTTER ON IT, MOM, TO EASE THE PAIN. YOU SEE, I DO REMEMBER.
JUST LIKE THE STORIES. THERE'S THIS ONE ABOUT COUSIN CALEB. HE LIVED IN THE 1860'S, T'CHALLA... AND THE STORY MOM TOLD WAS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AND HIS FAMILY RIGHT AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.
IT MADE ME CRY, THAT STORY, WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL... BUT I CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER HOW THE STORY WENT.



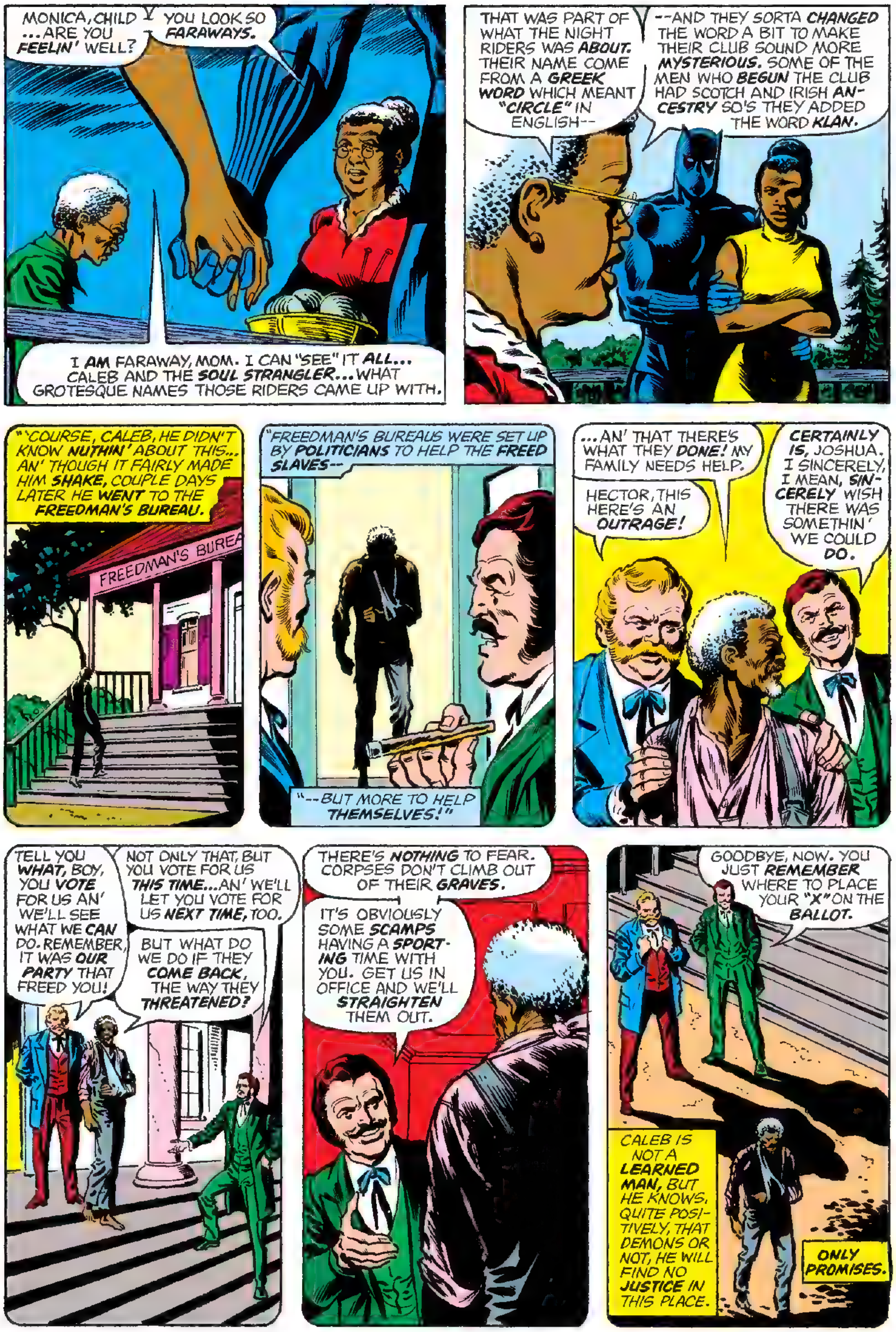
ANCESTRY AND HISTORY VANISH BECAUSE THE NEW GENERATIONS SELDOM CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT TO HEAR THE LIVES AND EVENTS OF THOSE WHO SHAPED THEM.
AND IF THOSE PERSONAL HISTORIES DIE UNTOLD... THEY ARE LOST TO US FOREVER.
THESE STORIES AREN'T LOST, T'CHALLA. I STILL KNOW THE STORY MONICA SPEAKS ABOUT. MY MOM USED TO TELL IT AT NIGHT, AFTER A DAY IN THE FIELDS--TOBACCO CROPS--NOT COTTON.
"WHEN I STARTED PICKING LEAVES, GUESS I WAS NO OLDER THAN TWELVE YEARS OLD. CALEB WAS MY GRANDFATHER'S COUSIN.
"I NEVER MET THE MAN, ACTUALLY--BUT WHEN MY MOTHER TOLD US WHAT HAPPENED... IT MADE ME WEEP, IT DID, FOR A MAN I'D NEVER MET."
THE WORDS TRIGGER A CORRESPONDING MEMORY IN THE PANTHER: AN OLD MAN--THE KING OF THE WAKANDAS--DYING, T'CHALLA STILL BELIEVING IN HIM, A MAN HE HAD NEVER REALLY KNOWN.
"THE CIVIL WAR FREED CALEB, BUT LEFT HIM WITH NOWHERE'S TO GO... LEFT HIM WITH A FAMILY, A RUN-DOWN SHACK, AND HIS IGNORANCE. HE DIDN'T HAVE NO SCHOOLIN' TO SPEAK OF.
"1867, I GUESS IT WAS... AND THAT'S WHEN THE KLAN STARTED. WASN'T A RACIAL THING AT FIRST... IT WAS MORE POLITICAL.
"BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE CALEB CARED MUCH ABOUT THAT WHEN THEY FIRST APPEARED ON THE HORIZON.
LORD, ALL MIGHTY, IT'S GHOSTS!
THEM THERE IS SATAN'S STALLIONS COMIN' OUT THE DARK! GET THE KIDS INSIDE, ELLIE!
BUT, CALEB...
NO BUTS, WOMAN, YOU GET IN THERE, NOW!


MONICA LYNNE CLOSES HER EYES, AND HER MOTHER'S REFLECTIVE WORDS TRANSPORT HER FROM THE PORCH. SHE VISUALIZES HER OWN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CHARACTERS, THE WAY SHE DID WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD AND LISTENED TO CARLTON E. MORSE'S RADIO EPIC, "I LOVE A MYSTERY!"
AND IN HER INTERPRETATION OF THE STORY, CALEB IS NOBLE AND UNCONQUERED, PROUD AND DEFIANT... A GIANT CAPABLE OF COMPASSION.
AND THE NIGHT THE KLAN MET COUSIN CALEB AND HIS FAMILY WAS AN EBON MYSTERY ...AND HER MAN, THE PANTHER, WAS THERE!
BEFORE THEY APPEAR ON THE HORIZON, THE PANTHER IS AWARE OF THEIR APPROACH.
HE WAITS WITH CONSIDERABLE COOL FOR THE INEVITABLE CONFLICT!
CALEB! WHAT IS OUT THERE?
NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF, ELLIE. WE'RE FREE NOW, AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET ANYONE PUT US BACK IN CHAINS!
MONICA HEARS THE DEATH RIDERS AS THEIR TREAD THUNDERS ACROSS THE EVENING CALM.
CALEB STANDS HIS GROUND.
AND THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES, EVER THE CAT'S, RECORD EVERY MOVEMENT.

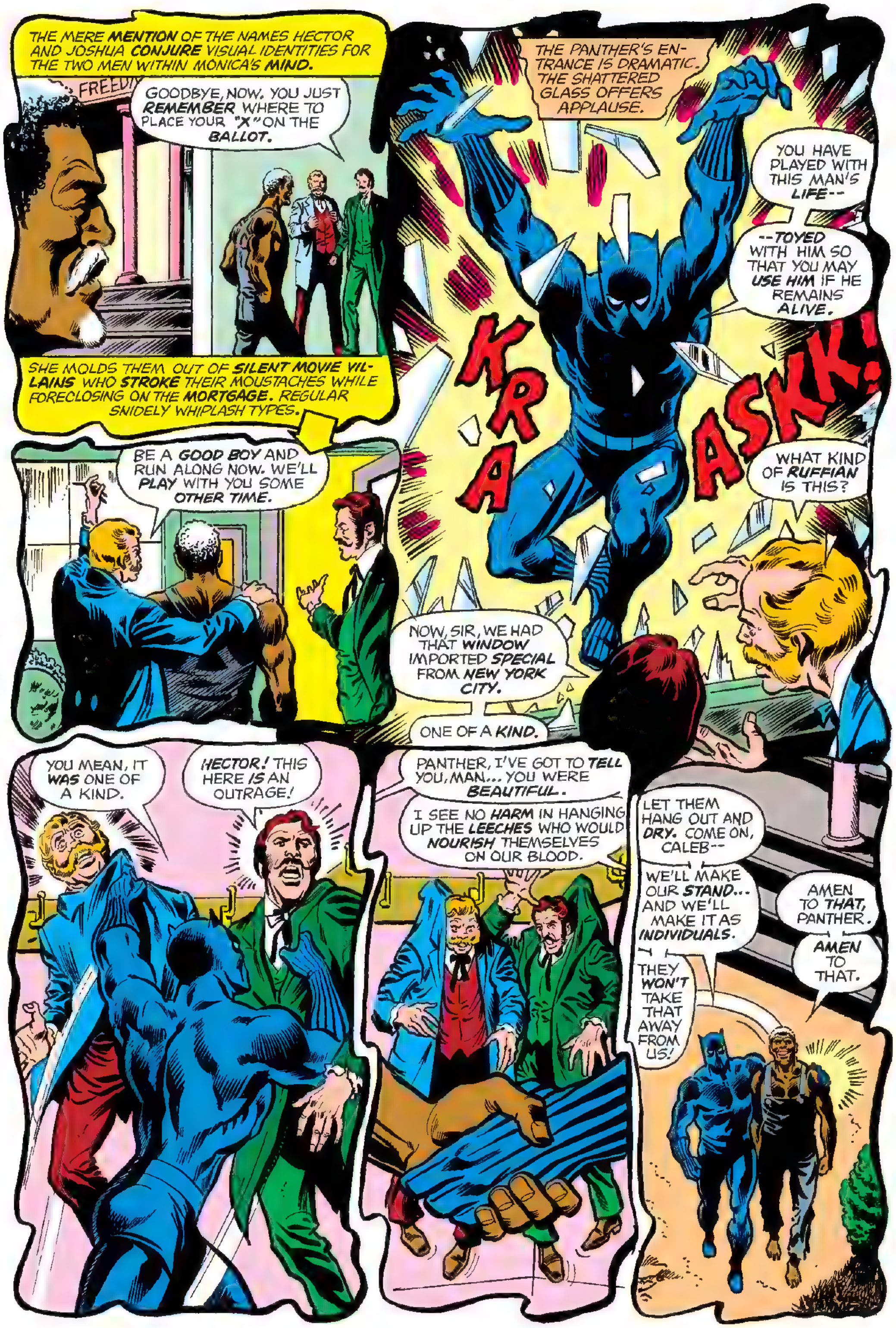
THERE IS NO CHAMPION IN JESSICA LYNNE'S STORY AND CALEB IS ONLY AN EX-SLAVE IN RAGGED CLOTHES, WHO FACES DEMONS THAT RIDE THE NIGHT.
NIGRA, YOU HAVE DARED TO OFFEND THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS WHO DIED ON THE FIELD OF HONOR AT SHILOH!
WE CALL TO THEM, OUR BROTHERS...THE ONES WHO DIED ALONGSIDE US IN THAT BATTLE--
--TO TELL THEM WE HAVE FOUND THE MAN WHO PROFANES THEIR SPILLED BLOOD! COME FORTH...AND FACE THE JUDGMENT OF SOUL STRANGLER!
DON'T GO!!
AIN'T HARDLY NO CHOICE, ELLIE.
CAIN'T RUN FROM DEMONS!
BEWARE, NIGRA...FOR WE ARE WATCHING YOU EVEN WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE US!
IF WE SEE YOU NEAR THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU OR THE LOYAL LEAGUES, WE WILL RETURN!
OBEY OUR WORDS... BE RESPECTFUL TO YOUR BETTERS...ELSE WE WILL STALK YOU--
--AND DRAG YOU SCREAMING TO THE FIERY PITS OF HELL!
A GHOSTLY STALLION HEEDS ITS DEMONIC MASTER'S COMMAND--
--AND CALEB IS DEFENSELESS!

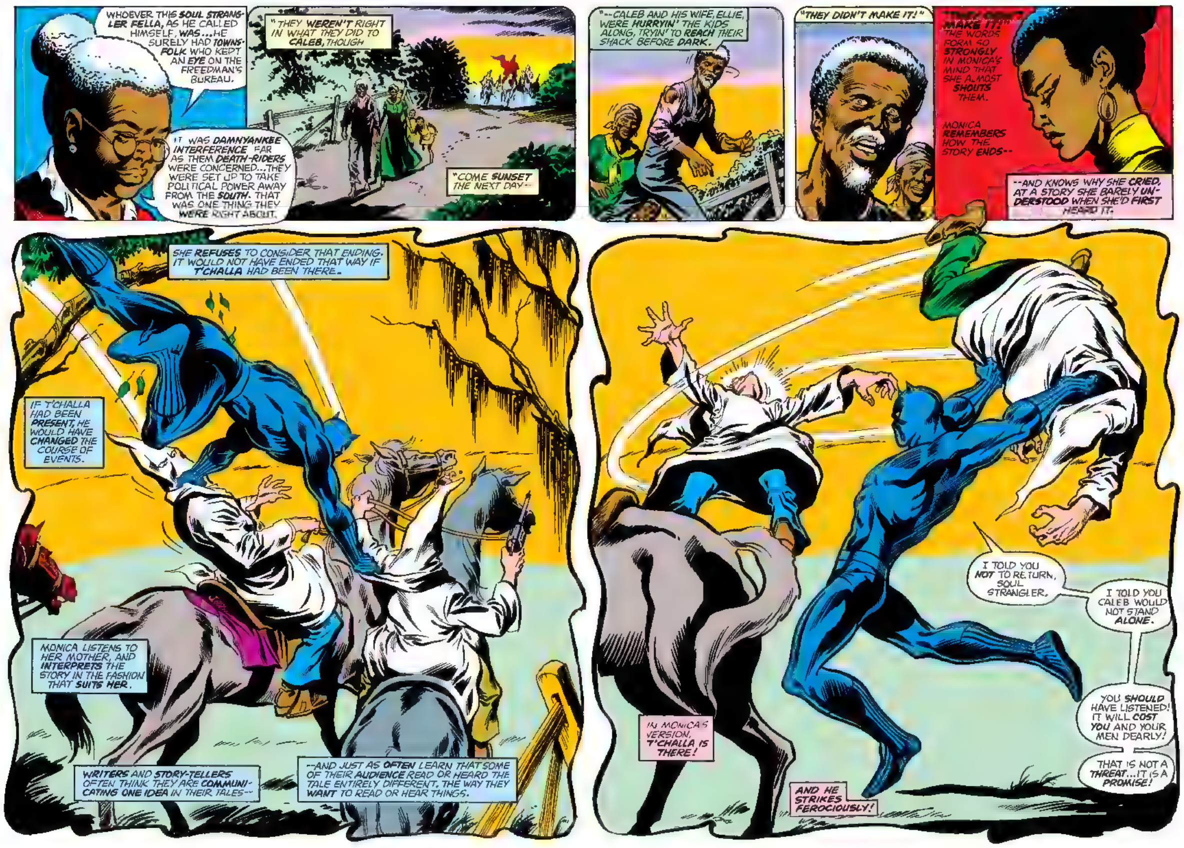


MONICA LISTENS TO HER MOTHER SPEAK OF GHOSTLY STALLIONS, AND SHE SEES THEM CLEARLY, AS IF THEY WERE QUITE REAL.
THEY ARE TERRIFYING CREATURES, WITH FLAMES LEAPING WILDLY FROM THEIR SKELETAL BODIES. SHE IMAGINES DEMONS, AND NOT MEN AND HORSES DRAPED IN SHEET GARMENTS.
CALEB FACES THE THREAT OF BRIMSTONE FIRE--
--AS IF IT CANNOT BURN HIM!
BEWARE, NIGRA...FOR WE ARE WATCHING YOU EVEN WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE US!
IF WE SEE YOU NEAR THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU OR THE LOYAL LEAGUES... WE WILL RETURN!
IF YOU DO--
--MIGHT BE...YOU'LL REGRET IT!
OBEY OUR WORDS...BE RESPECTFUL TO YOUR BETTERS...ELSE WE WILL STALK YOU--
--AND DRAG YOU SCREAMING TO THE FIERY PITS OF HELL!
THE BLACK CAT LISTENS--
--AND HIS ANGER IS GREAT.
YOU CLAIM YOU HAVE RIDDEN FROM THE FLAMES OF HELL.
THAT SEEMS A FITTING PLACE FOR SUCH BEINGS AS YOU.
RIDE BACK TO IT...WHILE YOU STILL HAVE THE CHANCE!
AND YOU WILL RIDE--
--ALONE!

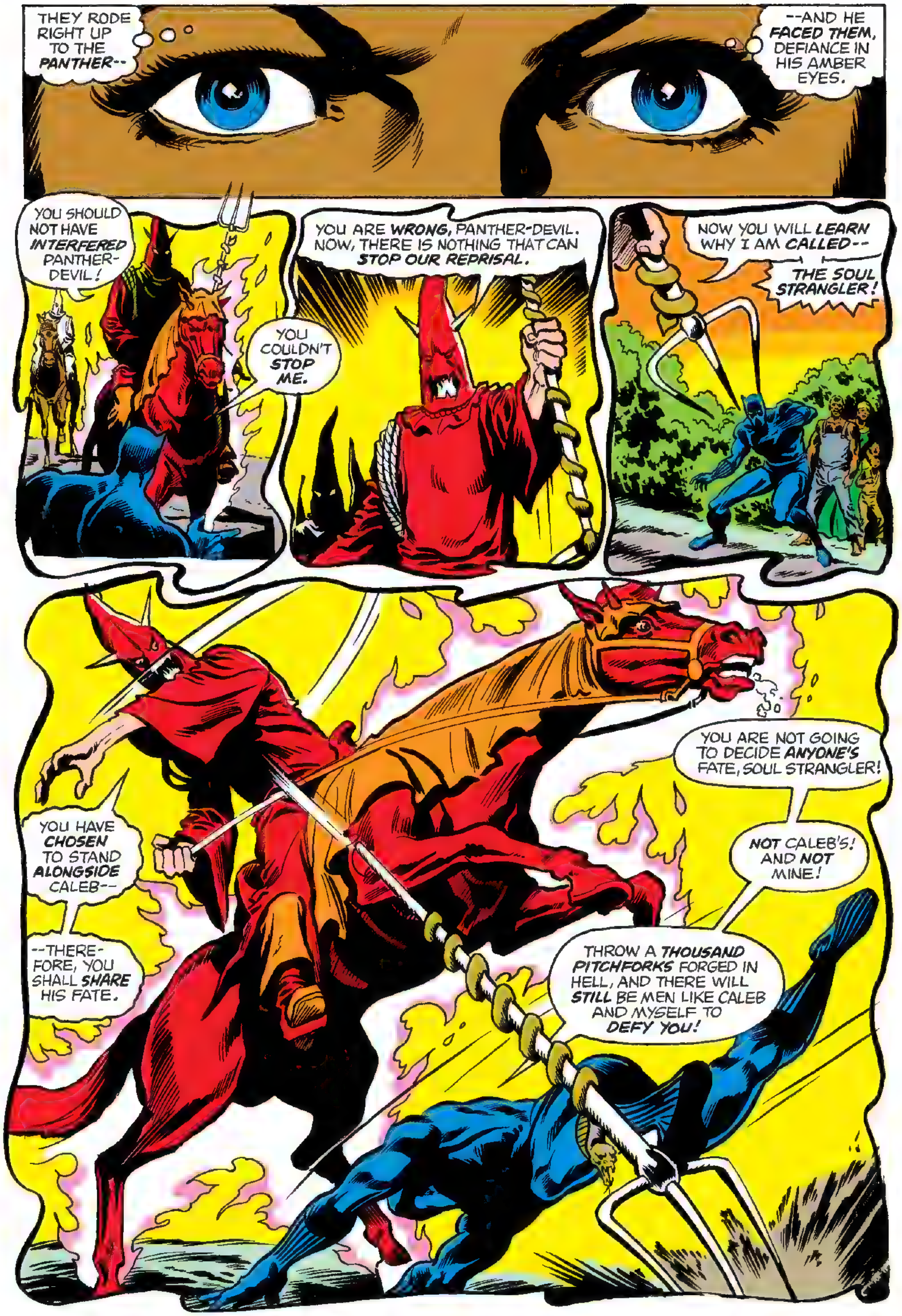


MONICA, CHILD ...ARE YOU FEELIN' WELL?
YOU LOOK SO FARAWAYS.
I AM FARAWAY, MOM. I CAN "SEE" IT ALL... CALEB AND THE SOUL STRANGLER...WHAT GROTESQUE NAMES THOSE RIDERS CAME UP WITH.
THAT WAS PART OF WHAT THE NIGHT RIDERS WAS ABOUT. THEIR NAME COME FROM A GREEK WORD WHICH MEANT "CIRCLE" IN ENGLISH--
--AND THEY SORTA CHANGED THE WORD A BIT TO MAKE THEIR CLUB SOUND MORE MYSTERIOUS. SOME OF THE MEN WHO BEGUN THE CLUB HAD SCOTCH AND IRISH ANCESTRY SO'S THEY ADDED THE WORD KLAN.
"'COURSE, CALEB, HE DIDN'T KNOW NUTHIN' ABOUT THIS... AN' THOUGH IT FAIRLY MADE HIM SHAKE, COUPLE DAYS LATER HE WENT TO THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU.
FREEDMAN'S BUREA
"FREEDMAN'S BUREAUS WERE SET UP BY POLITICIANS TO HELP THE FREED SLAVES--
"--BUT MORE TO HELP THEMSELVES!"
...AN' THAT THERE'S WHAT THEY DONE! MY FAMILY NEEDS HELP.
HECTOR, THIS HERE'S AN OUTRAGE!
CERTAINLY IS, JOSHUA. I SINCERELY, I MEAN, SINCERELY WISH THERE WAS SOMETHIN' WE COULD DO.
TELL YOU WHAT, BOY, YOU VOTE FOR US AN' WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO. REMEMBER, IT WAS OUR PARTY THAT FREED YOU!
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT YOU VOTE FOR US THIS TIME...AN' WE'LL LET YOU VOTE FOR US NEXT TIME, TOO.
BUT WHAT DO WE DO IF THEY COME BACK, THE WAY THEY THREATENED?
THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR. CORPSES DON'T CLIMB OUT OF THEIR GRAVES.
IT'S OBVIOUSLY SOME SCAMPS HAVING A SPORTING TIME WITH YOU. GET US IN OFFICE AND WE'LL STRAIGHTEN THEM OUT.
GOODBYE, NOW. YOU JUST REMEMBER WHERE TO PLACE YOUR "X" ON THE BALLOT.
CALEB IS NOT A LEARNED MAN, BUT HE KNOWS, QUITE POSITIVELY, THAT DEMONS OR NOT, HE WILL FIND NO JUSTICE IN THIS PLACE.
ONLY PROMISES.


THE MERE MENTION OF THE NAMES HECTOR AND JOSHUA CONJURE VISUAL IDENTITIES FOR THE TWO MEN WITHIN MONICA'S MIND.
GOODBYE, NOW. YOU JUST REMEMBER WHERE TO PLACE YOUR "X" ON THE BALLOT.
SHE MOLDS THEM OUT OF SILENT MOVIE VILLAINS WHO STROKE THEIR MOUSTACHES WHILE FORECLOSING ON THE MORTGAGE. REGULAR SNIDELY WHIPLASH TYPES.
BE A GOOD BOY AND RUN ALONG NOW. WE'LL PLAY WITH YOU SOME OTHER TIME.
THE PANTHER'S ENTRANCE IS DRAMATIC. THE SHATTERED GLASS OFFERS APPLAUSE.
YOU HAVE PLAYED WITH THIS MAN'S LIFE--
--TOYED WITH HIM SO THAT YOU MAY USE HIM IF HE REMAINS ALIVE.
KRAASKK!
WHAT KIND OF RUFFIAN IS THIS?
NOW, SIR, WE HAD THAT WINDOW IMPORTED SPECIAL FROM NEW YORK CITY.
ONE OF A KIND.
YOU MEAN, IT WAS ONE OF A KIND.
HECTOR! THIS HERE IS AN OUTRAGE!
PANTHER, I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, MAN... YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL.
I SEE NO HARM IN HANGING UP THE LEECHES WHO WOULD NOURISH THEMSELVES ON OUR BLOOD.
LET THEM HANG OUT AND DRY. COME ON, CALEB--
WE'LL MAKE OUR STAND... AND WE'LL MAKE IT AS INDIVIDUALS.
THEY WON'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM US!
AMEN TO THAT, PANTHER.
AMEN TO THAT.


WHOEVER THIS SOUL STRANGLER FELLA, AS HE CALLED HIMSELF, WAS...HE SURELY HAD TOWNSFOLK WHO KEPT AN EYE ON THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU.
IT WAS DAMNYANKEE INTERFERENCE FAR AS THEM DEATH-RIDERS WERE CONCERNED...THEY WERE SET UP TO TAKE POLITICAL POWER AWAY FROM THE SOUTH. THAT WAS ONE THING THEY WERE RIGHT ABOUT.
"THEY WEREN'T RIGHT IN WHAT THEY DID TO CALEB, THOUGH
"COME SUNSET THE NEXT DAY--
"--CALEB AND HIS WIFE, ELLIE, WERE HURRYIN' THE KIDS ALONG, TRYIN' TO REACH THEIR SHACK BEFORE DARK.
"THEY DIDN'T MAKE IT!"
MAKE IT!" THE WORDS FORM SO STRONGLY IN MONICA'S MIND THAT SHE ALMOST SHOUTS THEM.
MONICA REMEMBERS HOW THE STORY ENDS--
--AND KNOWS WHY SHE CRIED, AT A STORY SHE BARELY UNDERSTOOD WHEN SHE'D FIRST HEARD IT.
SHE REFUSES TO CONSIDER THAT ENDING. IT WOULD NOT HAVE ENDED THAT WAY IF T'CHALLA HAD BEEN THERE.
IF T'CHALLA HAD BEEN PRESENT, HE WOULD HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF EVENTS.
MONICA LISTENS TO HER MOTHER, AND INTERPRETS THE STORY IN THE FASHION THAT SUITS HER.
WRITERS AND STORY-TELLERS OFTEN THINK THEY ARE COMMUNICATING ONE IDEA IN THEIR TALES--
--AND JUST AS OFTEN LEARN THAT SOME OF THEIR AUDIENCE READ OR HEARD THE TALE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, THE WAY THEY WANT TO READ OR HEAR THINGS.
IN MONICA'S VERSION, T'CHALLA IS THERE!
AND HE STRIKES FEROCIOUSLY!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO RETURN, SOUL STRANGLER.
I TOLD YOU CALEB WOULD NOT STAND ALONE.
YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED! IT WILL COST YOU AND YOUR MEN DEARLY!
THAT IS NOT A THREAT...IT IS A PROMISE!

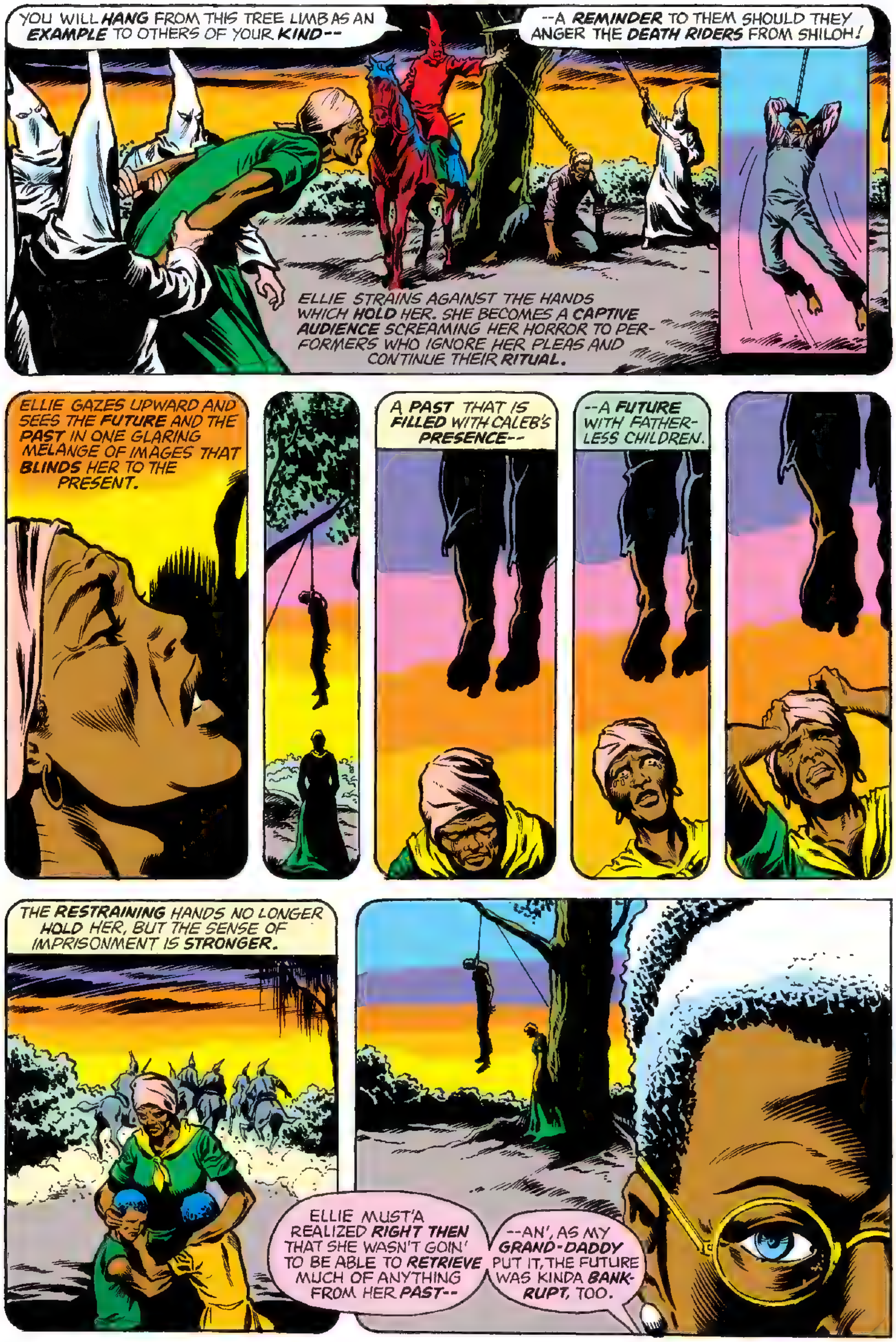
THEY RODE RIGHT UP TO CALEB--
--AND HE WAS MIGHTY SCARED.
IT IS GOOD THAT YOU TREMBLE. IT TELLS THAT YOU REALIZE THE FOLLY YOU COMMITTED WHEN YOU WENT TO THE LOYAL LEAGUE OFFICES.
YOU SHOULD HAVE TREMBLED BEFORE YOU WENT.
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEEDED OUR WARNING.
NOW, THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN STOP OUR REPRISAL.
NOW, YOU WILL LEARN WHY I AM CALLED--
THE SOUL STRANGLER!
TAKE MY HAND... CLUTCH IT!
THAT'S IT, BOY... TAKE THE HAND OF DEATH!
"THOSE MEN WERE ALL DRESSED UP IN CIVIL WAR UNIFORMS THAT THEY'D FIRED BULLETS INTO AND SMEARED THE HOLES WITH RED PAINT; THE SKELETAL HAND PRO'BLY CARVED FROM HICKORY WOOD. BUT YOU PRO'BLY COULDN'T CONVINCE CALEB OF THAT."
I DIED AT SHILOH... AND MY FLESH REMAINS BURIED IN MY GRAVE!
WE ARE THE SPIRITS... THE GHOSTS... OF CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS WHOSE BLOOD WAS WASTED.
TURN ABOUT, "FREED" MAN. TURN ABOUT AND LOOK AT YOUR ...
...EXECUTORS!

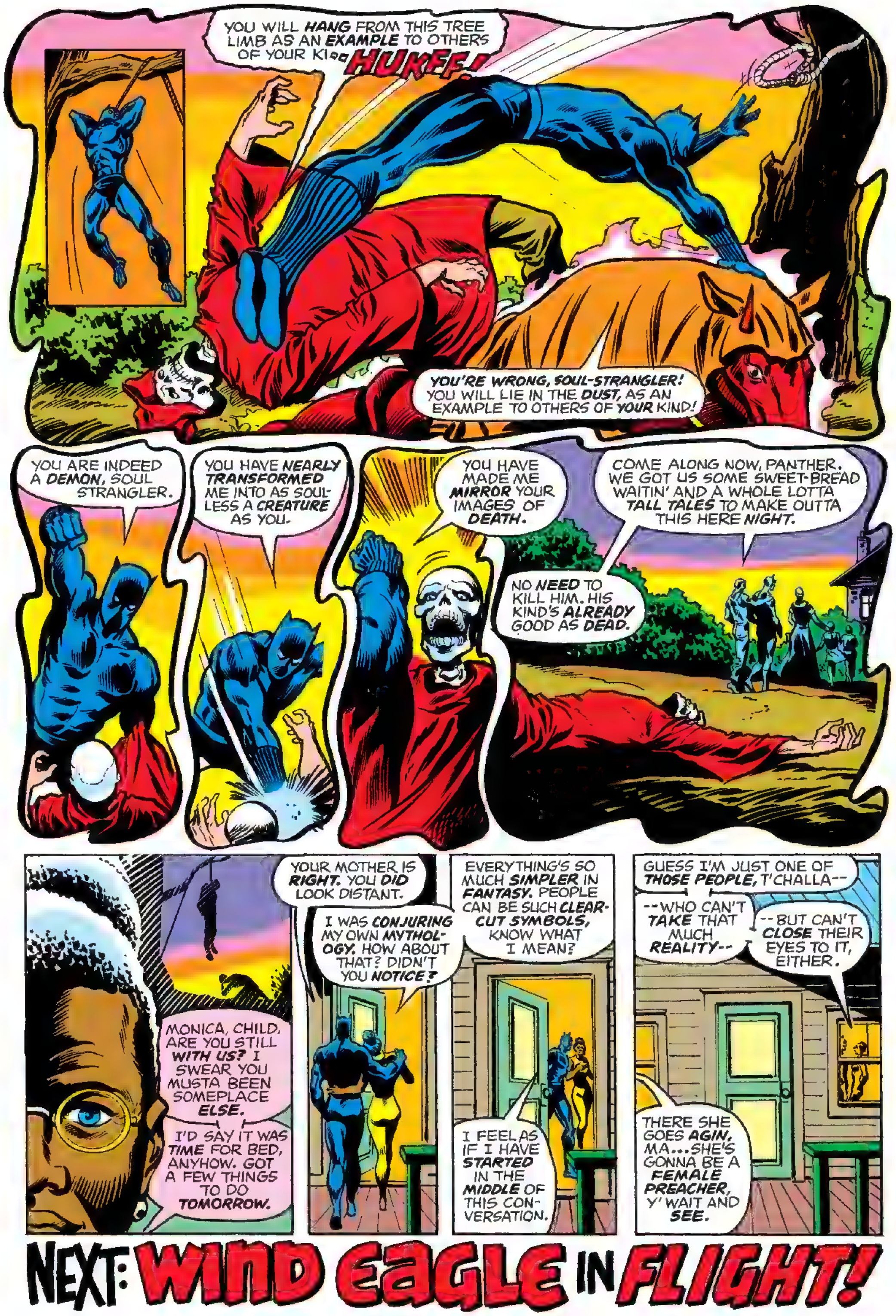


THEY RODE RIGHT UP TO THE PANTHER--
--AND HE FACED THEM, DEFIANCE IN HIS AMBER EYES.
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE INTERFERED PANTHER-DEVIL!
YOU COULDN'T STOP ME.
YOU ARE WRONG, PANTHER-DEVIL. NOW, THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN STOP OUR REPRISAL.
NOW YOU WILL LEARN WHY I AM CALLED--
THE SOUL STRANGLER!
YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO STAND ALONGSIDE CALEB--
--THEREFORE, YOU SHALL SHARE HIS FATE.
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DECIDE ANYONE'S FATE, SOUL STRANGLER!
NOT CALEB'S! AND NOT MINE!
THROW A THOUSAND PITCHFORKS FORGED IN HELL, AND THERE WILL STILL BE MEN LIKE CALEB AND MYSELF TO DEFY YOU!

"ELLIE, SHE SUDDENLY KNEW WHAT THEY WAS GONNA DO TO HER HUSBAND.
CALEB!
"COULD BE, SHE KNEW BEFORE THEM DEATH RIDERS KNEW. MAYBE THEY JUST INTENDED TO PUT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO CALEB.
"THE BULLET FAIR PICKED CALEB RIGHT OFF HIS FEET, AND ELLIE, WAY THE STORY GOES, SCREAMED CALEB'S NAME LIKE IT WAS THE LAST TIME HE WAS GONNA HEAR IT.
"SHE KNEW BEFORE SHE SAW THE NOOSE--
"--KNEW BEFORE IT TIGHT-ENED 'BOUT CALEB'S NECK--
"--KNEW IT AS CALEB WAS DRAGGED TO HIS FEET.
CALEB!
"ELLIE KNEW WHAT THEY WAS GONNA DO AND TRIED TO STOP IT."
CA--
LE--UGNH!

MONICA KNOWS THAT FIST NEVER WOULD HAVE REACHED ELLIE IF THE PANTHER HAD BEEN THERE.
CALEB!
GET AWAY FROM HIM, YOU IDIOT!
I--
--I CAN'T.
I WON'T KILL YOU--
--BUT I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU HAD DIED AT SHILOH.
WAY TO GO PANTHER! THESE HOB-GOBLINS SURE GOING TO BE SORRY THEY MESSED WITH US!
YOUR LAUGHTER IS ABOUT TO DIE, CALEB!
YOUR CHAMPION SHALL HANG FROM THE SAME BRANCH THAT AWAITS YOU.
FEEL THE NOOSE THAT WILL STEAL YOUR VERY SOUL, PANTHER.
I THINK WE HAVE HEARD THE LAST OF YOUR STIRRING-- BUT MEANINGLESS-- SPEECHES!


YOU WILL HANG FROM THIS TREE LIMB AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS OF YOUR KIND--
--A REMINDER TO THEM SHOULD THEY ANGER THE DEATH RIDERS FROM SHILOH!
ELLIE STRAINS AGAINST THE HANDS WHICH HOLD HER. SHE BECOMES A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE SCREAMING HER HORROR TO PERFORMERS WHO IGNORE HER PLEAS AND CONTINUE THEIR RITUAL.
ELLIE GAZES UPWARD AND SEES THE FUTURE AND THE PAST IN ONE GLARING MELANGE OF IMAGES THAT BLINDS HER TO THE PRESENT.
A PAST THAT IS FILLED WITH CALEB'S PRESENCE--
--A FUTURE WITH FATHERLESS CHILDREN.
THE RESTRAINING HANDS NO LONGER HOLD HER, BUT THE SENSE OF IMPRISONMENT IS STRONGER.
ELLIE MUST'A REALIZED RIGHT THEN THAT SHE WASN'T GOIN' TO BE ABLE TO RETRIEVE MUCH OF ANYTHING FROM HER PAST--
--AN', AS MY GRAND-DADDY PUT IT, THE FUTURE WAS KINDA BANKRUPT, TOO.



YOU WILL HANG FROM THIS TREE LIMB AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS OF YOUR KI--
HUKFF!
YOU'RE WRONG, SOUL-STRANGLER! YOU WILL LIE IN THE DUST, AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS OF YOUR KIND!
YOU ARE INDEED A DEMON, SOUL STRANGLER.
YOU HAVE NEARLY TRANSFORMED ME INTO AS SOUL-LESS A CREATURE AS YOU.
YOU HAVE MADE ME MIRROR YOUR IMAGES OF DEATH.
NO NEED TO KILL HIM. HIS KIND'S ALREADY GOOD AS DEAD.
COME ALONG NOW, PANTHER. WE GOT US SOME SWEET-BREAD WAITIN' AND A WHOLE LOTTA TALL TALES TO MAKE OUTTA THIS HERE NIGHT.
MONICA, CHILD, ARE YOU STILL WITH US? I SWEAR YOU MUSTA BEEN SOMEPLACE ELSE.
I'D SAY IT WAS TIME FOR BED, ANYHOW. GOT A FEW THINGS TO DO TOMORROW.
YOUR MOTHER IS RIGHT. YOU DID LOOK DISTANT.
I WAS CONJURING MY OWN MYTHOL-OGY. HOW ABOUT THAT? DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?
EVERYTHING'S SO MUCH SIMPLER IN FANTASY. PEOPLE CAN BE SUCH CLEAR-CUT SYMBOLS, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I FEEL AS IF I HAVE STARTED IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CON-VERSATION.
GUESS I'M JUST ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE, T'CHALLA--
--WHO CAN'T TAKE THAT MUCH REALITY--
--BUT CAN'T CLOSE THEIR EYES TO IT, EITHER.
THERE SHE GOES AGIN, MA...SHE'S GONNA BE A FEMALE PREACHER, Y' WAIT AND SEE.
NEXT: WIND EAGLE IN FLIGHT!

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

C/O MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

HASTA LA VISTA, BILLY GRAHAM or Make My Bed and Light the Light, I'll Be Home Late Tonight.

If you haven't leaped right to the JUNGLE REACTIONS section of this month's BLACK PANTHER, you have already noticed that page 5 marks the end of the irreverent Billy Graham's artwork for this ish and that page 6 marks the return of Rich (Swash) Buckler, who started the long-line of stimulating graphics that have graced this magazine since JUNGLE ACTION #6. Billy and Don have been close friends for several years.

(In fact, both Don and Billy, raconteurs extraordinaire, tell of some very wild incidents that occurred during Don's stay in Harlem four or five years back that involved demon-possessed cats, plumbers who looked like refugees from Murder Inc., and a character who answered to the name Voodoo.) But it wasn't until they both drifted into the frantic halls of Marvel and JUNGLE ACTION #10 that Don and Billy had the chance to work together on a completed project. There were lots of uncompleted projects before that time, but that's another story.

Anyhow, Don and Billy completed two years worth of BLACK PANTHER sagas, including the major portion of "Panther's Rage!", but the erstwhile Mr. Graham has found less time to devote to comics these days, pursuing the sweet lure of the stage and the performing arts. So it looks like Billy will be gone for a while, but Don claims he's always got a light lit for whenever Billy wants to get back into the thick of the comic industry lunacy.

Rich Buckler and Don have worked on everything from the initial three books of "Panther's Rage!" to Hodiah Twist's appearance in VAMPIRE TALES, and their work has proven to be a volatile mixture of excitement and creativity. Don has had the tremendous good fortune to work with such excellent artists as Billy and Rich on this strip, and from merely a glimpse of the visual extravaganza Don and Rich have brought forth for JUNGLE ACTION #23, our very next ish, the Panther is going to enter a whole new era of epic adventure.

And now, let's light a light for all you letter readers.

Dear Panther People:

What can I say but thank you?

Thank you for combining excellent graphics and imaginative, captivating storylines with true relevance—a relevance that goes beyond pitiful attempts to shock the reader by dramatizing the drug culture or exposing corruption in government. This is not to belittle such problematic crosses, nor the situations of those who must bear them; as you yourselves have helped to show me, the plight of an individual 24-Hour Man deserves at least as much concern as the plight of an entire Wakandan nation. Rather, it's to thank you for providing a meaningful insight into the problems *every* man faces...for making us look at ourselves, evaluate what we see, and actually *enjoy* this usually-painful process.

It's ironic that the comic characters who demonstrate the spiritual condition of Everyman the most effectively are a hideous cyborg, a Sorcerer Supreme, a Martian-modified gladiator, and an African monarch.

Thank you for a "comic book character" who manages to be a hero and a human being at once.

Thank you for T'Challa.

John Rieber
301 La Vista
McAllen, TX 78501

Thank you, John, for caring enough to take the time to set down your own feelings. Don feels much about T'Challa as you do, and—in an age of easy put-downs and ambiguities—he's glad that you've found the process of evaluation stimulating and rewarding, as well as entertaining. That's a great deal of what it's all about, John.

T'Challa may be on the endangered species list, since sales have dropped during the course of our "Panther Vs. The Klan" epic, but that won't make him less of a human being. The reasons for such a drop aren't easy to determine. It could be the topic or, mayhap, the lack of super-villains in the last couple of books. It could also be distribution, covers, or even the fact that Don was going through several wing-ding personal hassles at the time.

Actually, jungle comics have never been best sellers in the comic medium, and the fact that we have survived over three years (yes, Don, it *has* been that long) is quite an accomplishment in itself. And believe us, we have some plans for this series that will startle you, thrill you, entertain you, and even—hopefully—move you.

Dear Panther Producers,

The first half of issue #20 was beautifully crafted, but somehow it was an awkward series of pages. In contrast, the second half of the issue worked, while the transitional page between the two didn't. Why? I thought you'd never ask.

Billy's pictures and Don's words just aren't complementing each other the way they should. In the first half, the pacing of action and non-action sequences was off; my mind felt off-balance trying to straighten it all out. Again, art and words didn't fit together, except—strangely enough—in the fight scenes. Within each balloon the words were magnificent, but in taking them a page (or even a panel) at a time, one couldn't find a flow.

Turning to the second half, we find all that was missing from the first. The fact that the losing battle fought by the Panther was juxtaposed against Kevin's successful inner battle did much to bring up the quality of the issue. The way those panels of the fight with the Klan were done in a successive-action mode, created an impact I've rarely seen in comics. I wish the whole book could have been as good as those last few pages.

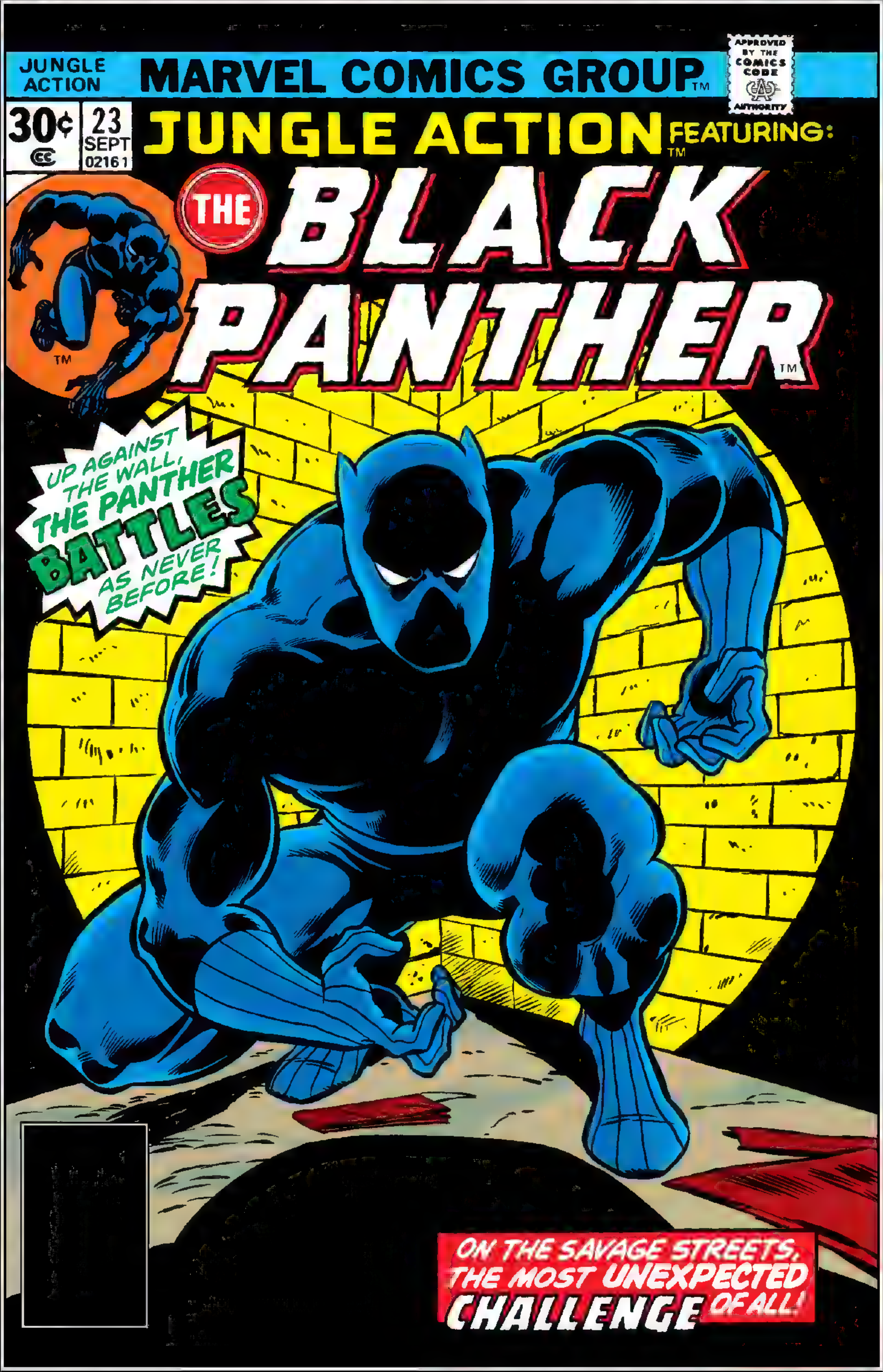
Glenn Rowsam
2818 23rd Ave.
Oakland, CA 94606

Don agrees with you, Glenn. He had intended for the supermarket scene to be reminiscent of the early Lee and Kirby sequences that placed a superhero in an everyday situation and recorded the public's reactions to his presence. So much for well-intentioned plans.

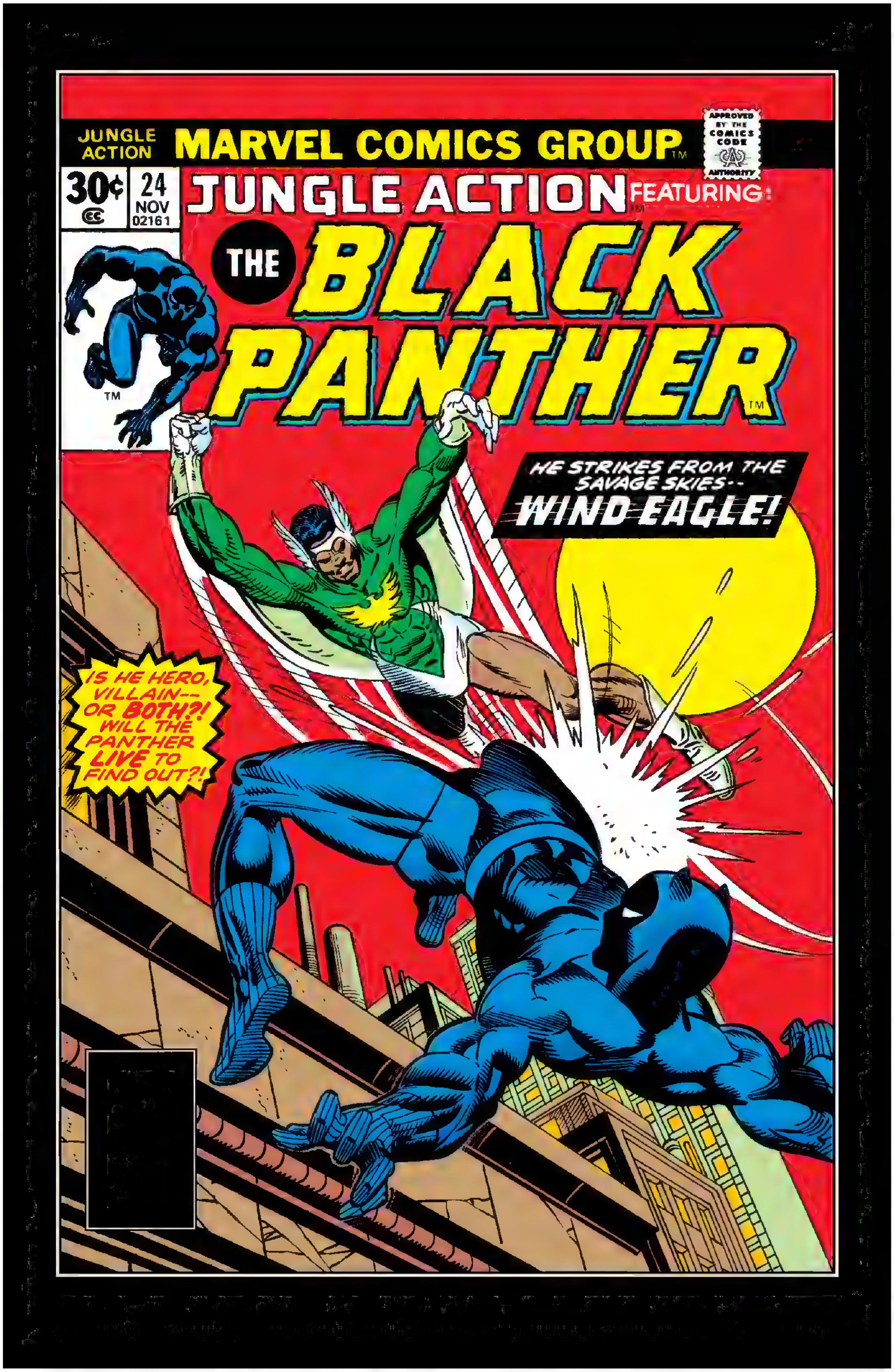
NEXT ISSUE: WIND EAGLE IN FLIGHT! Don McGregor and Rich Buckler have designed a double-page title splash that you have got to see to believe. It also introduces Wind Eagle into our saga, and he's a super-powered character unlike any you've ever seen!

You must be here! Why? Well, if you aren't, you'll miss the second version of the night Angela Lynne died. You'll miss the Panther's invasion of a swank country club (and golf will never be the same!). And you'll miss the deadliest trap for the Panther yet! See? That's why you must be here!

Until then, be kind to each other...be kind to yourself...and hang in there!



Reprinting *Daredevil* #69


JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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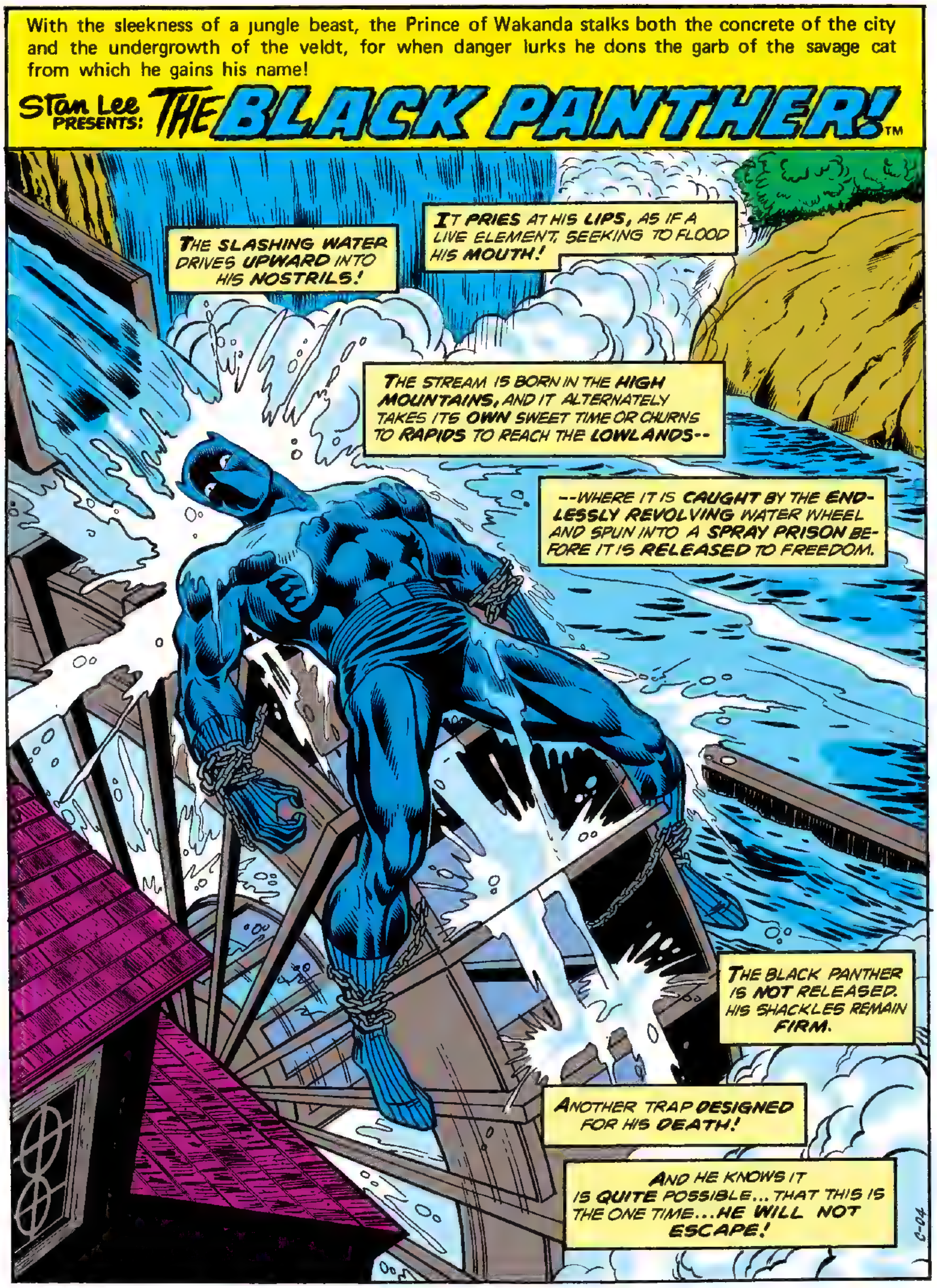
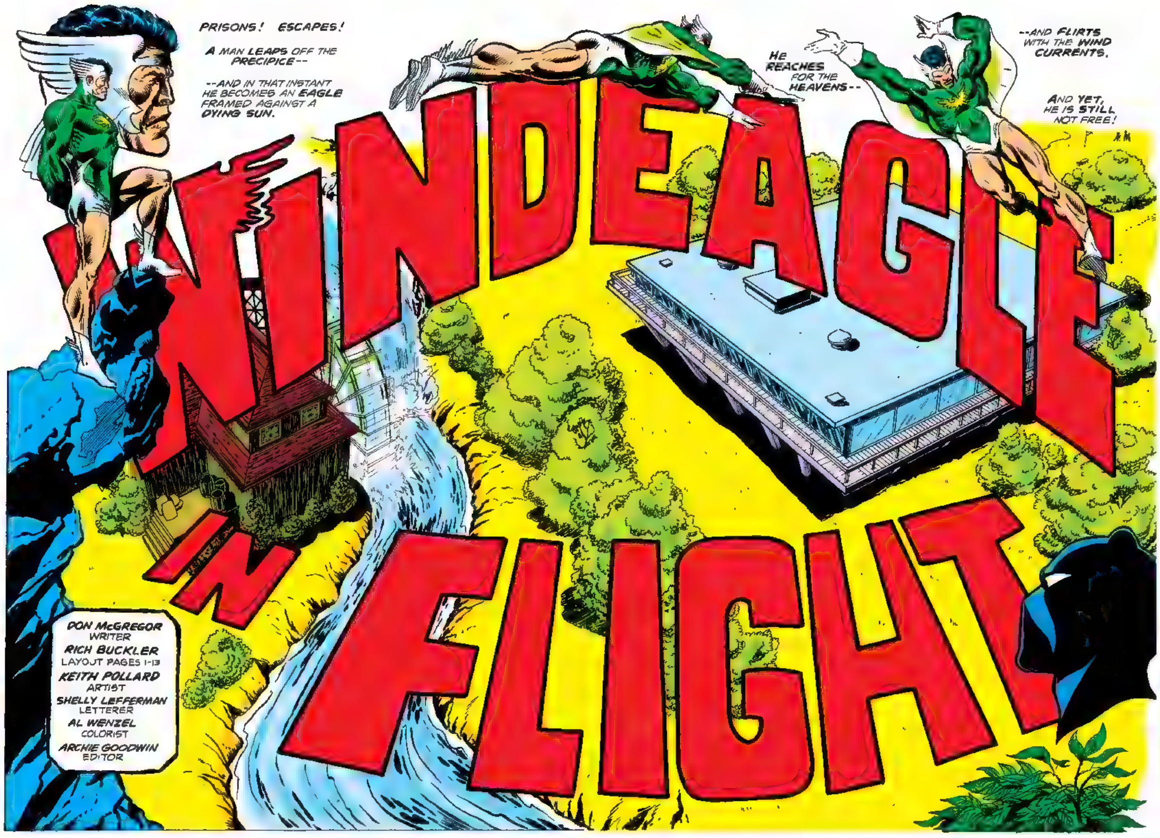
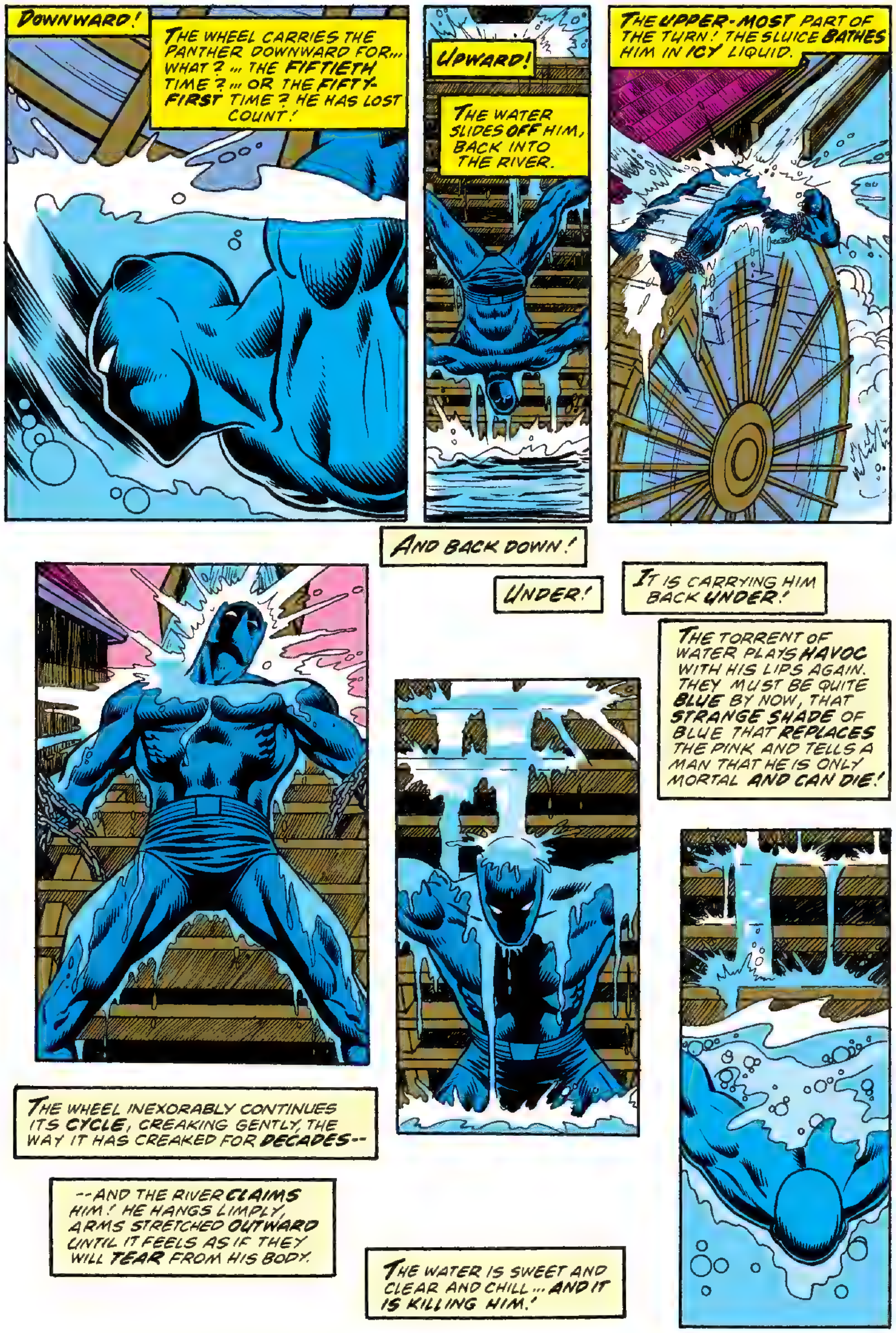
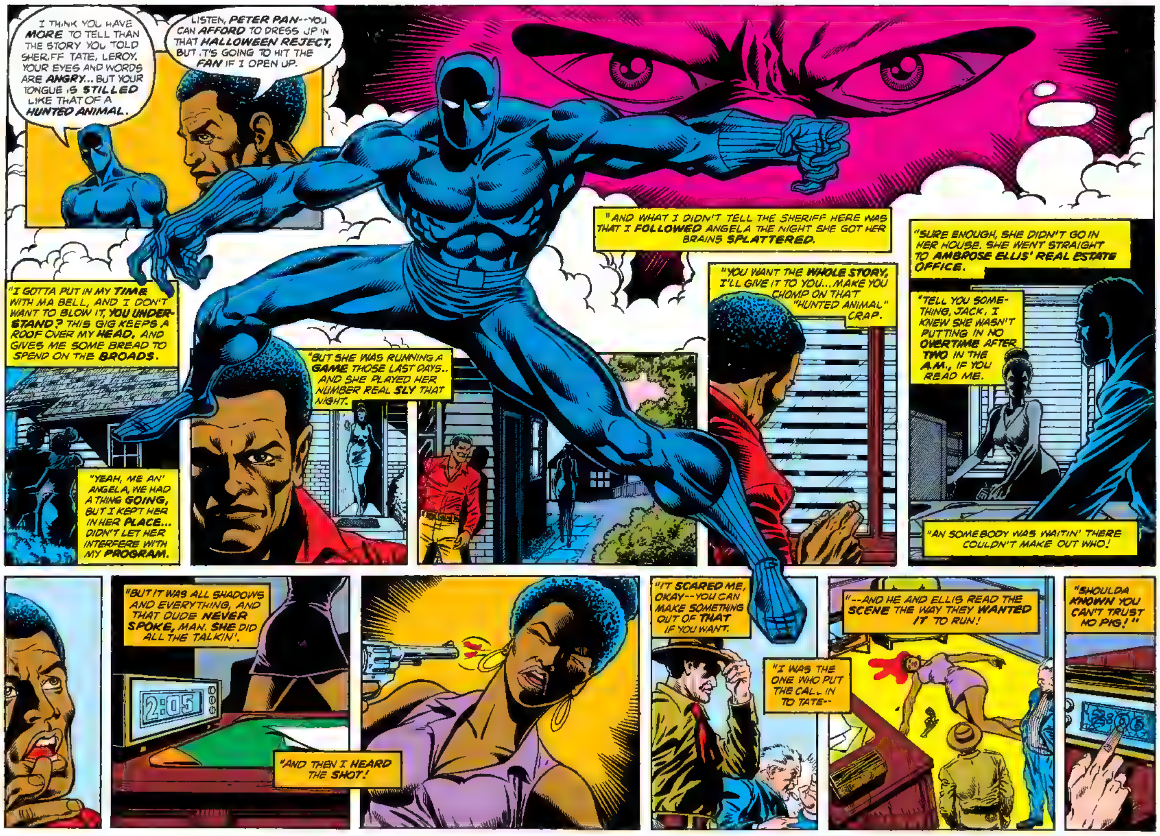
JUNGLE ACTION
FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
HE STRIKES FROM THE SAVAGE SKIES-- WIND EAGLE!
IS HE HERO, VILLAIN-- OR BOTH?! WILL THE PANTHER LIVE TO FIND OUT?!


With the sleekness of a jungle beast, the Prince of Wakanda stalks both the concrete of the city and the undergrowth of the veldt, for when danger lurks he dons the garb of the savage cat from which he gains his name!
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™
THE SLASHING WATER DRIVES UPWARD INTO HIS NOSTRILS!
IT PRIES AT HIS LIPS, AS IF A LIVE ELEMENT, SEEKING TO FLOOD HIS MOUTH!
THE STREAM IS BORN IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS, AND IT ALTERNATELY TAKES ITS OWN SWEET TIME OR CHURNS TO RAPIDS TO REACH THE LOWLANDS--
--WHERE IT IS CAUGHT BY THE ENDLESSLY REVOLVING WATER WHEEL AND SPUN INTO A SPRAY PRISON BEFORE IT IS RELEASED TO FREEDOM.
THE BLACK PANTHER IS NOT RELEASED. HIS SHACKLES REMAIN FIRM.
ANOTHER TRAP DESIGNED FOR HIS DEATH!
AND HE KNOWS IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE... THAT THIS IS THE ONE TIME... HE WILL NOT ESCAPE!

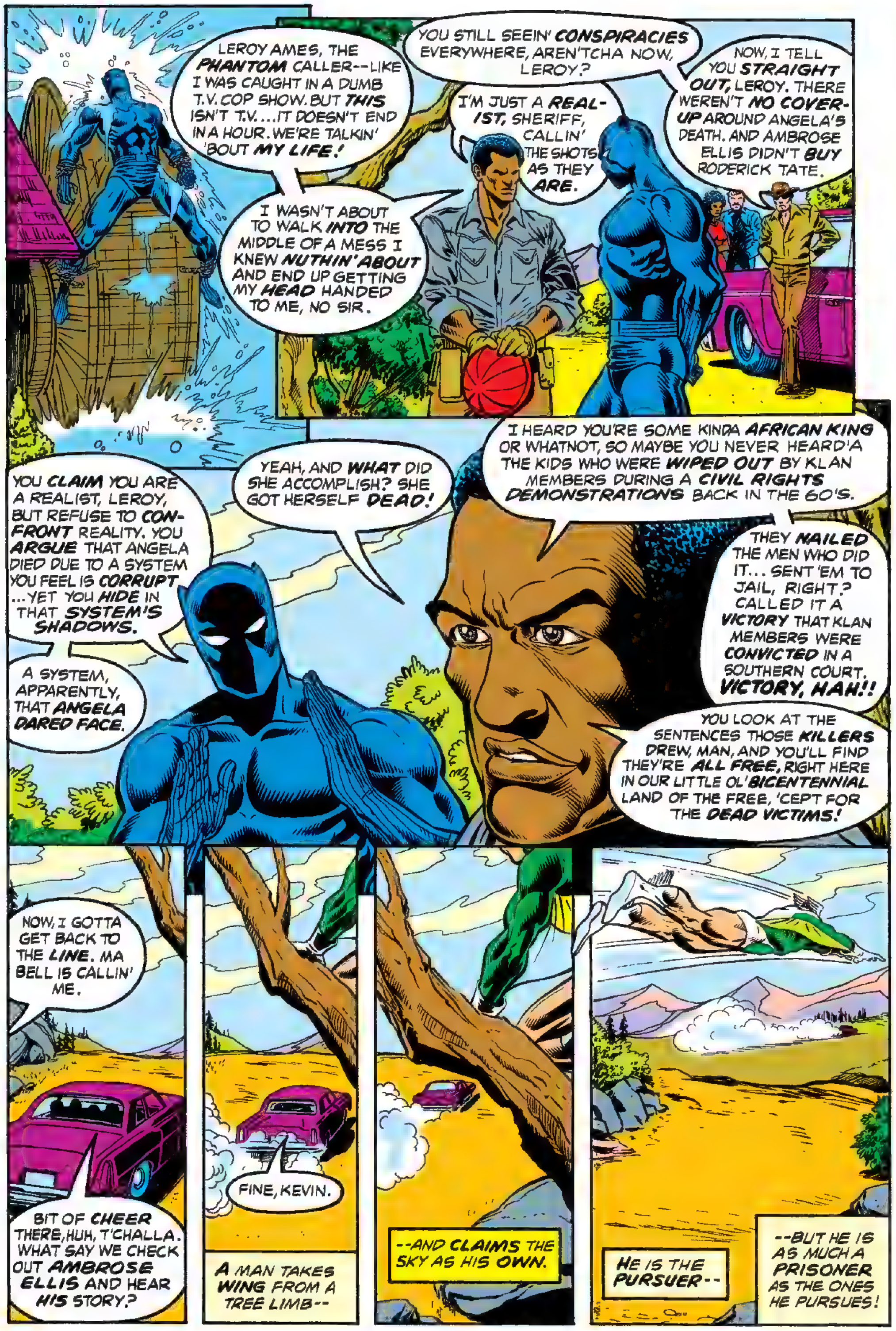

PRISONS! ESCAPES!
A MAN LEAPS OFF THE PRECIPICE--
--AND IN THAT INSTANT HE BECOMES AN EAGLE FRAMED AGAINST A DYING SUN.
HE REACHES FOR THE HEAVENS--
--AND FLIRTS WITH THE WIND CURRENTS.
AND YET, HE IS STILL NOT FREE!
WINDEAGLE IN FLIGHT
DON McGREGOR WRITER
RICH BUCKLER LAYOUT PAGES 1-13
KEITH POLLARD ARTIST
SHELLY LEFFERMAN LETTERER
AL WENZEL COLORIST
ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITOR

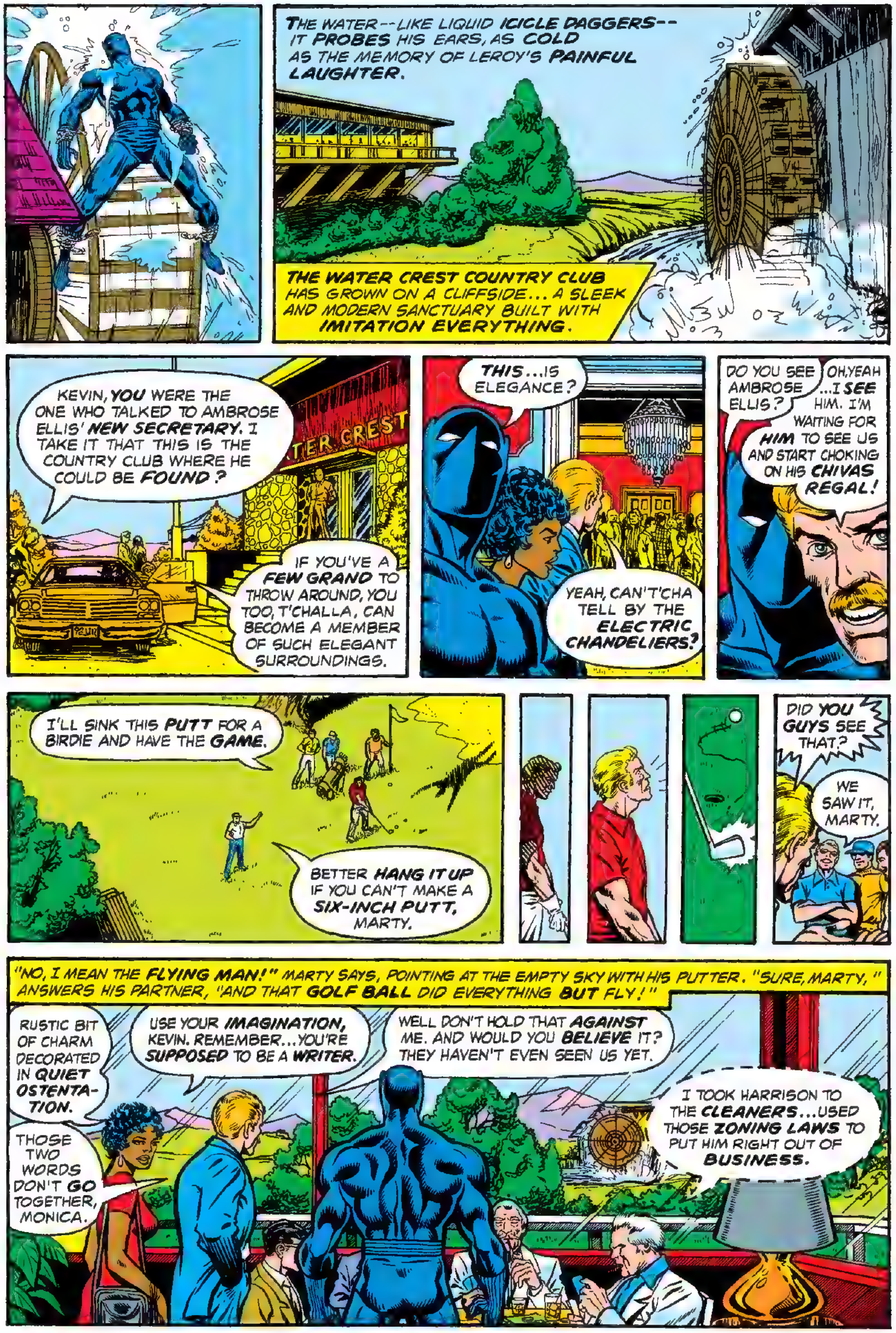

DOWNWARD!
THE WHEEL CARRIES THE PANTHER DOWNWARD FOR... WHAT? ... THE FIFTIETH TIME? ... OR THE FIFTY-FIRST TIME? HE HAS LOST COUNT!
UPWARD!
THE WATER SLIDES OFF HIM, BACK INTO THE RIVER.
THE UPPER-MOST PART OF THE TURN! THE SLUICE BATHES HIM IN ICY LIQUID.
AND BACK DOWN!
UNDER!
IT IS CARRYING HIM BACK UNDER!
THE TORRENT OF WATER PLAYS HAVOC WITH HIS LIPS AGAIN. THEY MUST BE QUITE BLUE BY NOW, THAT STRANGE SHADE OF BLUE THAT REPLACES THE PINK AND TELLS A MAN THAT HE IS ONLY MORTAL AND CAN DIE!
THE WHEEL INEXORABLY CONTINUES ITS CYCLE, CREAKING GENTLY, THE WAY IT HAS CREAKED FOR DECADES--
--AND THE RIVER CLAIMS HIM! HE HANGS LIMPLY, ARMS STRETCHED OUTWARD UNTIL IT FEELS AS IF THEY WILL TEAR FROM HIS BODY.
THE WATER IS SWEET AND CLEAR AND CHILL... AND IT IS KILLING HIM!

IT IS ODD, HE THINKS. A MAN CONSIDERS DYING FURTIVELY, AND HE WOULD RATHER DEATH REMAIN ELUSIVE, OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, THAT HE CHOOSE THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH. HE IS DYING IN A STATE CALLED GEORGIA, AND IT IS FAR REMOVED FROM HIS HOMELAND IN AFRICA.
THE MORNING CARRIED NO WARNING THAT HE MIGHT DIE!
NEITHER, FOR THAT MATTER, DID THE AFTERNOON!
BOTH MONICA AND I THANK YOU FOR PICKING US UP, KEVIN. I HOPE YOUR EDITOR AT THE GEORGIA SUN DOES NOT MIND.
OH, HE MINDS. AND HE CONSTANTLY REMINDS THAT HE MINDS. BUT MONICA'S SISTER... WELL, HER DEATH CAN SELL NEWSPAPERS...
...ESPECIALLY IF YOU PROVE ANGELA DID NOT COMMIT SUICIDE AND WAS ACTUALLY KILLED BY THE KLAN!
AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THAT MAN UP ON THE TELEPHONE POLE HELPING MA BELL TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY IS LEROY AMES, THE MAN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
THEN OUR SEARCH HAS ENDED.
MR. AMES, WE WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU.
CAN'TCHA SEE I'M BUSY, MAN? YOU COOL YOUR HEELS FOR AWHILE.
THAT IS NOT QUITE POSSIBLE, LEROY--
--AND IF YOU WILL NOT JOIN US--
--I WILL JOIN YOU!
PERHAPS WE CAN START ANEW, LEROY.
HOW'D YOU... KNOW MY NAME?
YOU WENT OUT WITH ANGELA LYNNE. YOU WERE OUT WITH HER THE NIGHT SHE DIED.
SO YOU FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH ME, HUH? I KNEW IT WAS GONNA COME DOWN SOONER OR LATER. ALL RIGHT, LET'S CLIMB OFFA THIS RIG AND GET THE THIRD DEGREE OVER WITH.
THIS IS SHERIFF RODERICK TATE WITH US.
YEAH, WE'VE HAD A COUPLE OF GO-ROUNDS. YOU WANT TO KNOW 'BOUT THAT NIGHT WHEN ANGELA GOT HERSELF GOOD AND WASTED, RIGHT?
YOU GOT IT, LEROY, THE FIRST TIME!

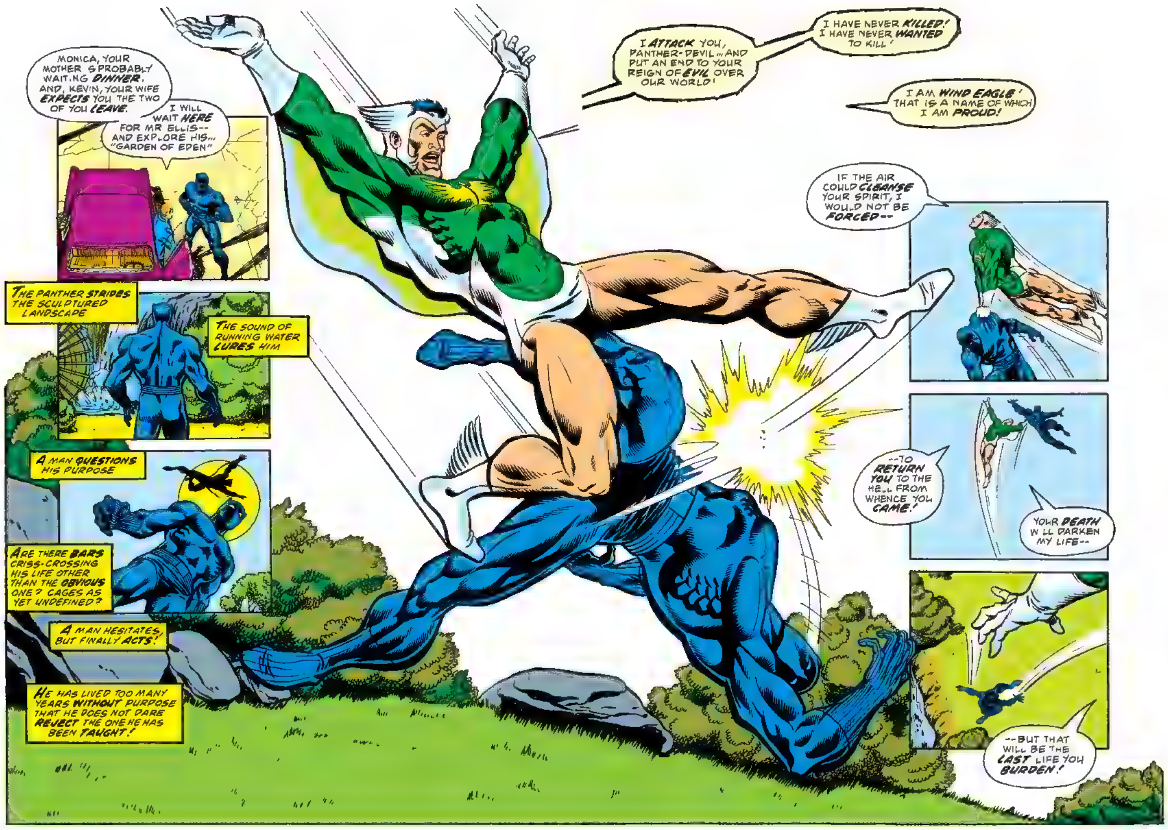


I THINK YOU HAVE MORE TO TELL THAN THE STORY YOU TOLD SHERIFF TATE, LEROY. YOUR EYES AND WORDS ARE ANGRY... BUT YOUR TONGUE IS STILLED LIKE THAT OF A HUNTED ANIMAL.
LISTEN, PETER PAN--YOU CAN AFFORD TO DRESS UP IN THAT HALLOWEEN REJECT, BUT IT'S GOING TO HIT THE FAN IF I OPEN UP.
"I GOTTA PUT IN MY TIME WITH MA BELL, AND I DON'T WANT TO BLOW IT, YOU UNDERSTAND? THIS GIG KEEPS A ROOF OVER MY HEAD, AND GIVES ME SOME BREAD TO SPEND ON THE BROADS.
"YEAH, ME AN' ANGELA, WE HAD A THING GOING, BUT I KEPT HER IN HER PLACE... DIDN'T LET HER INTERFERE WITH MY PROGRAM.
"BUT SHE WAS RUNNING A GAME THOSE LAST DAYS.. AND SHE PLAYED HER NUMBER REAL SLY THAT NIGHT.
"AND WHAT I DIDN'T TELL THE SHERIFF HERE WAS THAT I FOLLOWED ANGELA THE NIGHT SHE GOT HER BRAINS SPLATTERED.
"YOU WANT THE WHOLE STORY, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU...MAKE YOU CHOMP ON THAT "HUNTED ANIMAL" CRAP.
"SURE ENOUGH, SHE DIDN'T GO IN HER HOUSE. SHE WENT STRAIGHT TO AMBROSE ELLIS' REAL ESTATE OFFICE.
"TELL YOU SOMETHING, JACK. I KNEW SHE WASN'T PUTTING IN NO OVERTIME AFTER TWO IN THE A.M., IF YOU READ ME.
"AN SOMEBODY WAS WAITIN' THERE COULDN'T MAKE OUT WHO!
"BUT IT WAS ALL SHADOWS AND EVERYTHING, AND THAT DUDE NEVER SPOKE, MAN. SHE DID ALL THE TALKIN'.
2:05
"AND THEN I HEARD THE SHOT!
"IT SCARED ME, OKAY--YOU CAN MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF THAT IF YOU WANT.
"I WAS THE ONE WHO PUT THE CALL IN TO TATE--
"--AND HE AND ELLIS READ THE SCENE THE WAY THEY WANTED IT TO RUN!
"SHOULDA KNOWN YOU CAN'T TRUST NO PIG!"

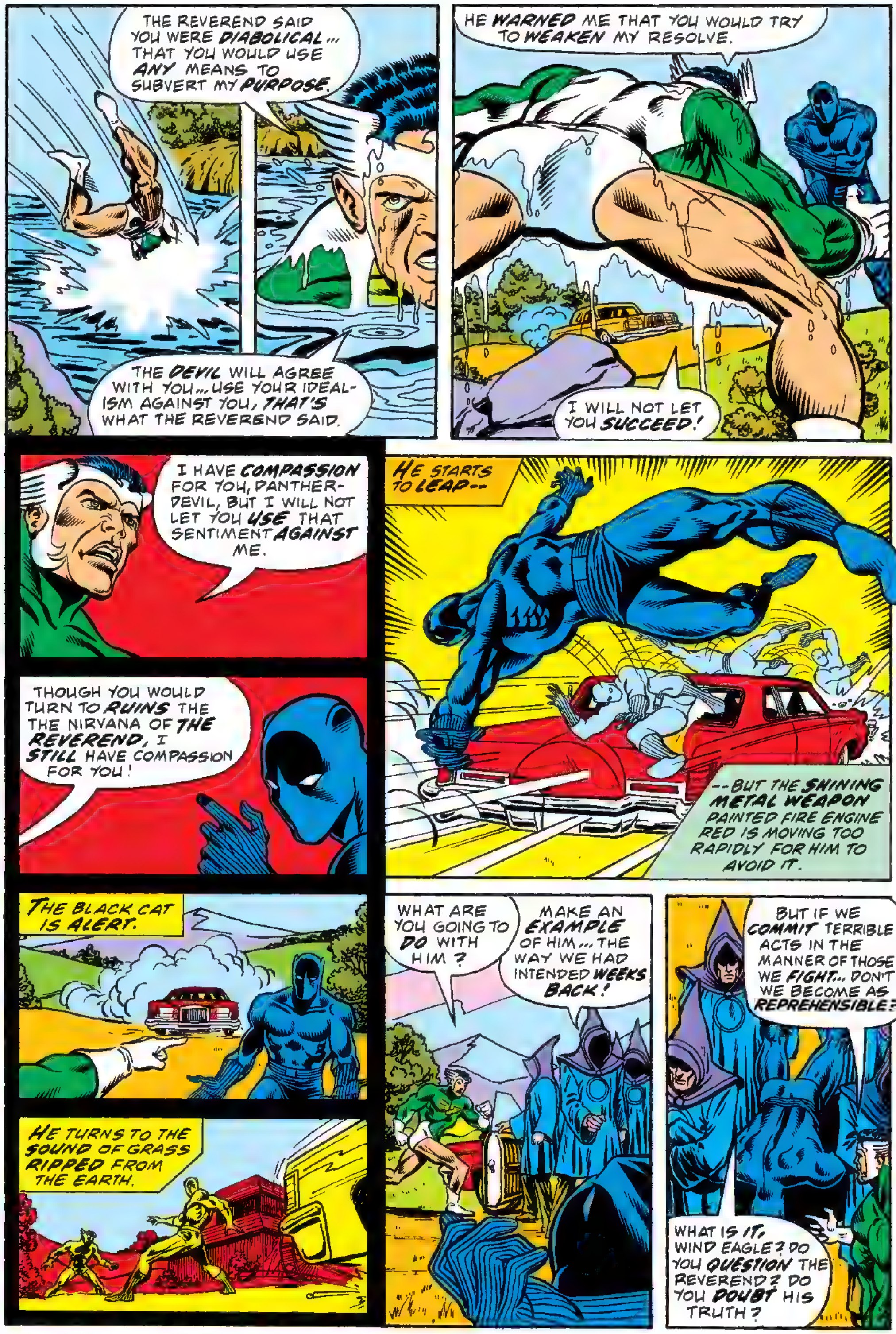

LEROY AMES, THE PHANTOM CALLER--LIKE I WAS CAUGHT IN A DUMB T.V. COP SHOW. BUT THIS ISN'T T.V. ...IT DOESN'T END IN A HOUR. WE'RE TALKIN' 'BOUT MY LIFE!
I WASN'T ABOUT TO WALK INTO THE MIDDLE OF A MESS I KNEW NUTHIN' ABOUT AND END UP GETTING MY HEAD HANDED TO ME, NO SIR.
YOU STILL SEEIN' CONSPIRACIES EVERYWHERE, AREN'TCHA NOW, LEROY?
I'M JUST A REAL-IST, SHERIFF, CALLIN' THE SHOTS AS THEY ARE.
NOW, I TELL YOU STRAIGHT OUT, LEROY. THERE WEREN'T NO COVER-UP AROUND ANGELA'S DEATH. AND AMBROSE ELLIS DIDN'T BUY RODERICK TATE.
YOU CLAIM YOU ARE A REALIST, LEROY, BUT REFUSE TO CON-FRONT REALITY. YOU ARGUE THAT ANGELA DIED DUE TO A SYSTEM YOU FEEL IS CORRUPT ...YET YOU HIDE IN THAT SYSTEM'S SHADOWS.
A SYSTEM, APPARENTLY, THAT ANGELA DARED FACE.
YEAH, AND WHAT DID SHE ACCOMPLISH? SHE GOT HERSELF DEAD!
I HEARD YOU'RE SOME KINDA AFRICAN KING OR WHATNOT, SO MAYBE YOU NEVER HEARD'A THE KIDS WHO WERE WIPED OUT BY KLAN MEMBERS DURING A CIVIL RIGHTS DEMONSTRATIONS BACK IN THE 60'S.
THEY NAILED THE MEN WHO DID IT... SENT 'EM TO JAIL, RIGHT? CALLED IT A VICTORY THAT KLAN MEMBERS WERE CONVICTED IN A SOUTHERN COURT. VICTORY, HAH!!
YOU LOOK AT THE SENTENCES THOSE KILLERS DREW, MAN, AND YOU'LL FIND THEY'RE ALL FREE, RIGHT HERE IN OUR LITTLE OL' BICENTENNIAL LAND OF THE FREE, 'CEPT FOR THE DEAD VICTIMS!
NOW, I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE LINE. MA BELL IS CALLIN' ME.
BIT OF CHEER THERE, HUH, T'CHALLA. WHAT SAY WE CHECK OUT AMBROSE ELLIS AND HEAR HIS STORY?
FINE, KEVIN.
A MAN TAKES WING FROM A TREE LIMB--
--AND CLAIMS THE SKY AS HIS OWN.
HE IS THE PURSUER--
--BUT HE IS AS MUCH A PRISONER AS THE ONES HE PURSUES!


THE WATER--LIKE LIQUID ICICLE DAGGERS--IT PROBES HIS EARS, AS COLD AS THE MEMORY OF LEROY'S PAINFUL LAUGHTER.
THE WATER CREST COUNTRY CLUB HAS GROWN ON A CLIFFSIDE... A SLEEK AND MODERN SANCTUARY BUILT WITH IMITATION EVERYTHING.
KEVIN, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TALKED TO AMBROSE ELLIS' NEW SECRETARY. I TAKE IT THAT THIS IS THE COUNTRY CLUB WHERE HE COULD BE FOUND?
TER CREST
IF YOU'VE A FEW GRAND TO THROW AROUND, YOU TOO, T'CHALLA, CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF SUCH ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS.
THIS...IS ELEGANCE?
YEAH, CAN'T'CHA TELL BY THE ELECTRIC CHANDELIERS?
DO YOU SEE AMBROSE ELLIS?
OH, YEAH ...I SEE HIM. I'M WAITING FOR HIM TO SEE US AND START CHOKING ON HIS CHIVAS REGAL!
I'LL SINK THIS PUTT FOR A BIRDIE AND HAVE THE GAME.
BETTER HANG IT UP IF YOU CAN'T MAKE A SIX-INCH PUTT, MARTY.
DID YOU GUYS SEE THAT?
WE SAW IT, MARTY.
"NO, I MEAN THE FLYING MAN!" MARTY SAYS, POINTING AT THE EMPTY SKY WITH HIS PUTTER. "SURE, MARTY," ANSWERS HIS PARTNER, "AND THAT GOLF BALL DID EVERYTHING BUT FLY!"
RUSTIC BIT OF CHARM DECORATED IN QUIET OSTENTATION.
THOSE TWO WORDS DON'T GO TOGETHER, MONICA.
USE YOUR IMAGINATION, KEVIN. REMEMBER...YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A WRITER.
WELL DON'T HOLD THAT AGAINST ME. AND WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? THEY HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN US YET.
I TOOK HARRISON TO THE CLEANERS...USED THOSE ZONING LAWS TO PUT HIM RIGHT OUT OF BUSINESS.

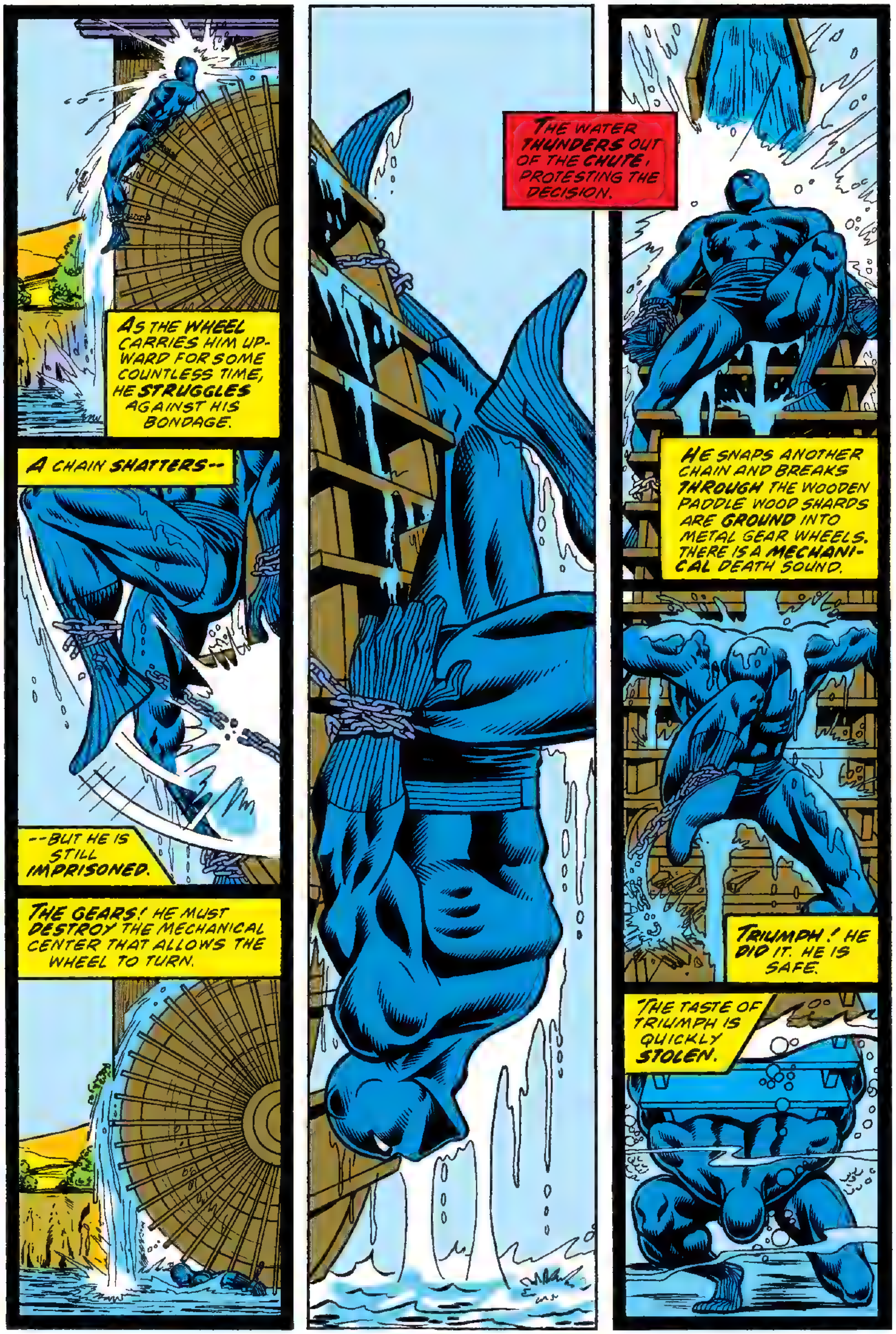
MR. ELLIS, WE REGRET HAVING TO INTRUDE UPON YOUR..."BUSINESS" AFFAIR.
THEY ARE ACCEPTED, MR. ELLIS. I AM T'CHALLA.
NOW WHAT HAVE HERE? LET ME GUESS. HALLOWEEN HAS COME EARLY THIS YEAR?
OH, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T SEE MISS LYNNE, THERE. YOU MUST BE HERE ABOUT YOUR SISTER. PLEASE ACCEPT MY UTMOST APOLOGIES.
DON'T YOU FEEL ILL AT EASE WANDERING AROUND IN THAT GET-UP?
THIS "GET-UP" AS YOU REFER TO IT, SIR, HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO WEAR. BUT LET US NOT DISCUSS TOPICS THAT MIGHT BE ALIEN TO YOU.
WELL, THERE, SHAWLA, THIS CLUB IS A TINY PIECE OF GOD'S COUNTRY.
DOES YOUR GOD CHARGE ADMISSION TO DETERMINE WHO IS ALLOWED THROUGH THESE GATES?
DOES HE CHARGE AD-MISSION... HEY, THAT'S A GOOD ONE. I THOUGHT YOU KINGS HAD NO SENSE OF HUMOR? HA! HA! HA!
YOU FIND MY QUESTION... AMUSING?
I WON'T SPLIT A GUT OVER IT, BUT IT'S GOOD FOR A LAUGH.
IT APPEARS YOU CAN BUY YOUR GOD, OR LEAST RENT HIM, WITH LITTLE DOWN PAYMENT.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I MERELY THOUGHT YOU'D FIND THE REMARK ...HUMOROUS, MR. ELLIS.
WE CAME HERE TO ASK YOU ABOUT ANGELA'S DEATH.
MAYBE WE CAN MAKE IT SOME OTHER TIME.
I WILL STROLL THE CLUB GROUNDS WHILE YOU FINISH YOUR... IMPORTANT DISCUSSION--
--AND THEN, WE CAN TALK!
A MAN LANDS ON THE ROOFTOP, MILES FROM WHERE HE BEGAN FLIGHT--
--AND WONDERS IF HE IS STILL INSIDE THE CAGE HE SOUGHT TO ESCAPE!


MONICA, YOUR MOTHER'S PROBABLY WAITING DINNER. AND, KEVIN, YOUR WIFE EXPECTS YOU. THE TWO OF YOU LEAVE.
I WILL WAIT HERE FOR MR ELLIS-- AND EXPLORE HIS... "GARDEN OF EDEN"
THE PANTHER STRIDES THE SCULPTURED LANDSCAPE
THE SOUND OF RUNNING WATER LURES HIM
A MAN QUESTIONS HIS PURPOSE
ARE THERE BARS CRISS-CROSSING HIS LIFE OTHER THAN THE OBVIOUS ONE? CAGES AS YET UNDEFINED?
A MAN HESITATES, BUT FINALLY ACTS!
HE HAS LIVED TOO MANY YEARS WITHOUT PURPOSE THAT HE DOES NOT DARE REJECT THE ONE HE HAS BEEN TAUGHT!
I ATTACK YOU, PANTHER-DEVIL... AND PUT AN END TO YOUR REIGN OF EVIL OVER OUR WORLD!
I HAVE NEVER KILLED! I HAVE NEVER WANTED TO KILL!
I AM WIND EAGLE! THAT IS A NAME OF WHICH I AM PROUD!
IF THE AIR COULD CLEANSE YOUR SPIRIT, I WOULD NOT BE FORCED--
--TO RETURN YOU TO THE HELL FROM WHENCE YOU CAME!
YOUR DEATH WILL DARKEN MY LIFE--
--BUT THAT WILL BE THE LAST LIFE YOU BURDEN!

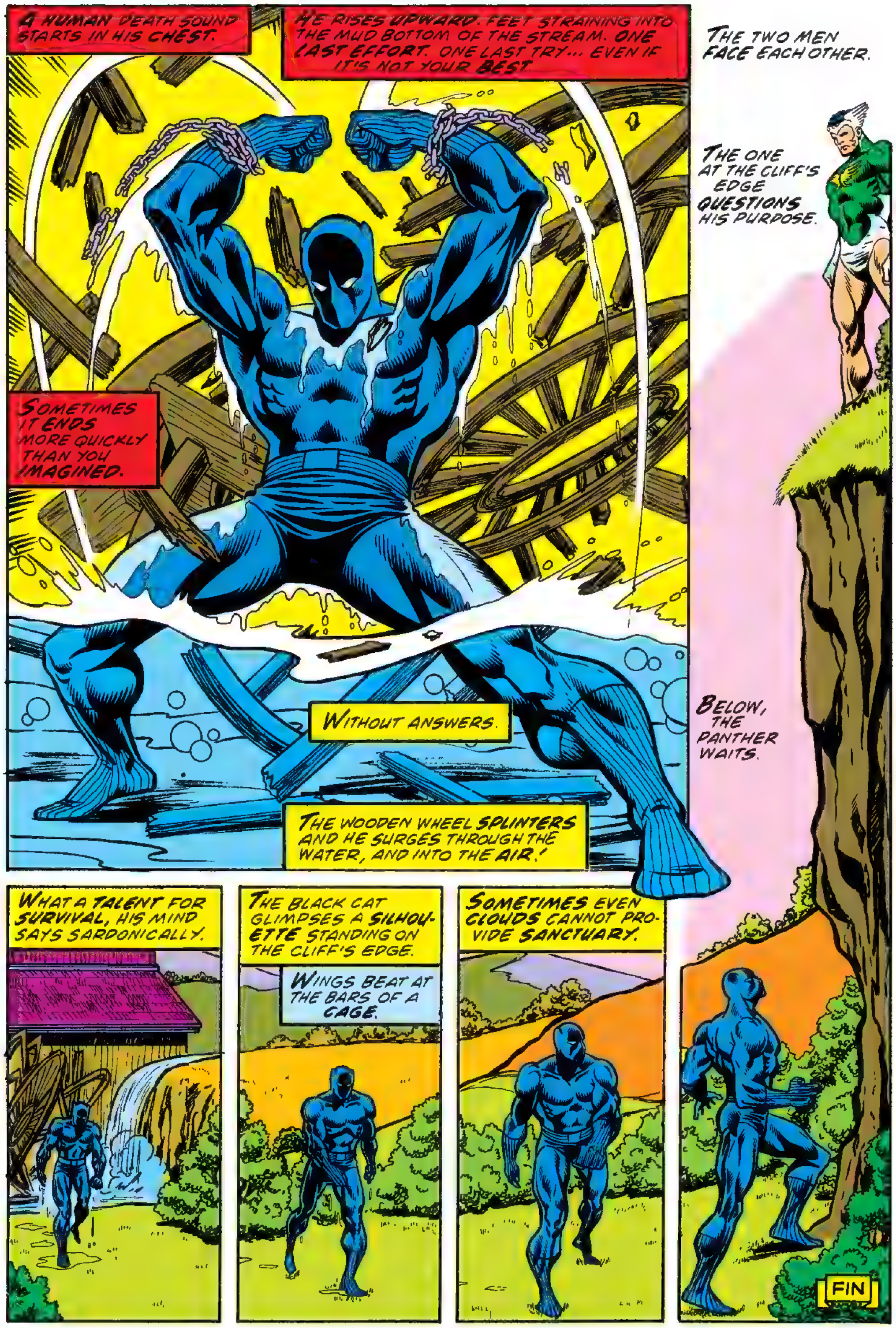
IF YOU WOULD HAVE LISTENED TO WORDS, PANTHER-DEVIL, I WOULD HAVE SHOUTED THEM FROM MY HEART!
BUT YOU HAVE NO HEART, DO YOU, PANTHER-DEVIL?
PANTHER-DEVIL.
IN WAKANDA, HE HAD FOUND THE TERM AMUSING WHEN IT WAS SPOKEN BY TAYETE.
STILL ALIVE?
TRULY... YOU ARE A DEVIL!
THE REVEREND WARNED ME THAT YOU WOULD BE A FEARSOME ENTITY!
BUT THEY GAVE ME THE WIND TO COMMAND!
YOU DO NOT COMMAND THE WIND, YOU RIDE WITH IT--
-- AND SHOULD CHERISH THE ABILITY TO DO SO!
CAN WE TALK NOW? OR ARE YOU COMMITTED TO MORE FOLLY?
ARE YOU DETERMINED THAT WE BATTER EACH OTHER SENSELESS UNTIL ONE OF US LIES BROKEN AT THE OTHER'S FEET?


THE REVEREND SAID YOU WERE DIABOLICAL... THAT YOU WOULD USE ANY MEANS TO SUBVERT MY PURPOSE.
THE DEVIL WILL AGREE WITH YOU... USE YOUR IDEALISM AGAINST YOU, THAT'S WHAT THE REVEREND SAID.
HE WARNED ME THAT YOU WOULD TRY TO WEAKEN MY RESOLVE.
I WILL NOT LET YOU SUCCEED!
I HAVE COMPASSION FOR YOU, PANTHER-DEVIL, BUT I WILL NOT LET YOU USE THAT SENTIMENT AGAINST ME.
THOUGH YOU WOULD TURN TO RUINS THE THE NIRVANA OF THE REVEREND, I STILL HAVE COMPASSION FOR YOU!
THE BLACK CAT IS ALERT.
HE TURNS TO THE SOUND OF GRASS RIPPED FROM THE EARTH.
HE STARTS TO LEAP--
--BUT THE SHINING METAL WEAPON PAINTED FIRE ENGINE RED IS MOVING TOO RAPIDLY FOR HIM TO AVOID IT.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH HIM?
MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HIM... THE WAY WE HAD INTENDED WEEKS BACK!
BUT IF WE COMMIT TERRIBLE ACTS IN THE MANNER OF THOSE WE FIGHT... DON'T WE BECOME AS REPREHENSIBLE?
WHAT IS IT, WIND EAGLE? DO YOU QUESTION THE REVEREND? DO YOU DOUBT HIS TRUTH?

NO... NOT THAT.
I QUESTIONED TOO LONG... REJECTED TOO MUCH... BEFORE THE REVEREND GAVE ME SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN.
IT'S JUST THAT... I HOPE MY DESIRE FOR SOME ANSWER... SOME WAY... HASN'T ENDED UP USING ME IN THE MANNER I FEARED MOST.
A MAN FLIES INTO THE CLOUDS.
INSIDE THE CLOUDS, PERHAPS HE WILL NOT SEE THE BARS OF HIS CAGE.
AND IF HE CAN CONVINCE HIMSELF THEY DO NOT EXIST, HE WILL NOT HAVE TO SPLATTER HIS BRAINS AGAINST THEM.
THE SLASHING WATER DRIVES UPWARD INTO HIS NOSTRILS AND AWAKENS HIM.
IT PRIES AT HIS LIPS, AND IN THAT INSTANT OF AWARENESS HIS PANIC ALMOST OPENS HIS MOUTH.
SURVIVE.
YOU MUST SURVIVE TO FIGHT THE NEXT BATTLE. IF ONLY THE WATER WOULD CEASE FOR A MOMENT AND LET HIM THINK.



AS THE WHEEL CARRIES HIM UPWARD FOR SOME COUNTLESS TIME, HE STRUGGLES AGAINST HIS BONDAGE.
A CHAIN SHATTERS--
--BUT HE IS STILL IMPRISONED.
THE GEARS! HE MUST DESTROY THE MECHANICAL CENTER THAT ALLOWS THE WHEEL TO TURN.
THE WATER THUNDERS OUT OF THE CHUTE, PROTESTING THE DECISION.
HE SNAPS ANOTHER CHAIN AND BREAKS THROUGH THE WOODEN PADDLE. WOOD SHARDS ARE GROUND INTO METAL GEAR WHEELS. THERE IS A MECHANICAL DEATH SOUND.
TRIUMPH! HE DID IT. HE IS SAFE.
THE TASTE OF TRIUMPH IS QUICKLY STOLEN.



A HUMAN DEATH SOUND STARTS IN HIS CHEST.
HE RISES UPWARD, FEET STRAINING INTO THE MUD BOTTOM OF THE STREAM. ONE LAST EFFORT. ONE LAST TRY... EVEN IF IT'S NOT YOUR BEST.
SOMETIMES IT ENDS MORE QUICKLY THAN YOU IMAGINED.
WITHOUT ANSWERS.
THE WOODEN WHEEL SPLINTERS AND HE SURGES THROUGH THE WATER, AND INTO THE AIR!
THE TWO MEN FACE EACH OTHER.
THE ONE AT THE CLIFF'S EDGE QUESTIONS HIS PURPOSE.
BELOW, THE PANTHER WAITS.
WHAT A TALENT FOR SURVIVAL, HIS MIND SAYS SARDONICALLY.
THE BLACK CAT GLIMPSES A SILHOUETTE STANDING ON THE CLIFF'S EDGE.
WINGS BEAT AT THE BARS OF A CAGE.
SOMETIMES EVEN CLOUDS CANNOT PROVIDE SANCTUARY.
FIN

JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP · 575 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK NY 10022

This is the last issue of JUNGLE ACTION. As in most such cases, the sales were not quite good enough to keep the book on the stands.

We wish that we had had time to bring the Panther vs. the Klan saga to a more satisfying close. Indeed, had not a few missed deadlines on our part necessitated a reprint fill-in last issue, that close might have come about.

Don't think that the story of a T'Challa is at an end, however! In just sixty days BLACK PANTHER #1 will be making its appearance, brought to you by the man who co-created the King of the Wakandas—Jack Kirby!

But now, before we wring down the curtain on JUNGLE ACTION, here's a sampling of some of the pithier letters of comment received on the Klan stories.

Dear Don and Billy,

I've just finished JUNGLE ACTION #21...shaking.

It has been months since I left Louisville, but the sights/sounds/smells of my encounters with the Klan and the anti-busers linger on. As I read "A Cross Burning Darkly, Blackening The Night," all those events came rushing back.

The complex emotions and imagery that this story provoked brought it all back home: the punching and the cursing at rallies when people spotted me taking pictures; friends—black and white—being threatened and heckled, ducking beer cans and bricks for following their conscience and trying to communicate; watching the riots on TV while hearing the sirens outside the windows; opening the door to Jim, bloody faced, leaning on the stairs; the rush to the hospital and the waiting; cops everywhere in formation, wearing riot gear; bon-fires and pickets on the road; "Honk if you're against busing," and kids —9 and 10 year olds—running beside our car, swearing, their older brothers' beer cans bouncing off the roof; my little sister saying that she's gonna go to school anyway, even if the rock hits *her* window next time; the Nazi toughs, drunk in the back rows by the doors; the cowls coming off, the fists in the air, the roar of the crowd, the rush of the flames sweeping up the cross...

Don, your perceptions of character and contemporary myth/reality are so fine, so strong. I'm listening to Lloyd Lynne speaking, and I wonder if here, in this oh-so-American drama, we can play the myth through, find the America we started to look for so many years ago.

S.D.W.
On the road

Dear Don,

This letter doesn't have much to do with the BLACK PANTHER. It has to do with his most recent adversary, the Klan. I have just come across some rather startling information. There is a very large Klan membership in the Hudson County, New Jersey area, and the center of activity is where I live in Jersey City. This revelation is a real shock, but I guess it shouldn't be. If the group is here then I am sure they are in other Eastern areas, Queens, Yonkers, Westchester, etc.

I came upon this information from a very reliable source, namely two people who are in the process of joining the Klan. I've seen the pamphlets for new recruits. It costs $15.00 for your gown and hood, and you get one cross you can carry at meetings or burn.

Jersey City Heights, where I live, is where all the meetings take place. Two bars within a few blocks of my apartment are gathering sites. I always knew the people here were weird, but this really blew my mind. It brought the recent BLACK PANTHER trilogy right into my home.

Anonymous
Jersey City Heights, NJ 07304

We had originally planned to bring this series eastward, and delve into Klan operations—fictionally, but based on real events—in upper New York.

Dear Guys,

I am a white, middle-class, urban American who will probably never truly know what the black experience is all about. This is really nothing unusual, since there are undoubtedly some blacks who will never know what the black experience is all about.

However, there is always art...and art is capable of making the black experience available to everyone, making it, more specifically, the human experience.

When the late, great Billie Holiday sang "Strange Fruit," I felt black, and I felt the pain of being black.

When I see a film like "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," I feel black, and not only the pain, but the joy and pride of being black, too.

And, when I read a story like JUNGLE ACTION #22's "Death Riders On the Horizon," I become black. I felt myself *become* Monica Lynne.

I was knocked out by the staggering of the actual narration with Monica's fantasy distortions...perhaps this aspect of the story alone speaks more about the black/human will to endure more than any other.

What can I say? "Death Riders on the Horizon" is art. And, McGregor is an artist.

Bob Rodi
34 Chatham Lane
Oak Brook, IL 66251

Dear Don and Bill,

There aren't any words to describe how JUNGLE ACTION #21 affected me. I guess a lame "thank you" will have to do.

Ann Nichols
4864 Sioux Avenue
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

Dear Don and Billy,

"A Cross Burning Darkly, Blackening the Night" reminds me painfully of man's hard-headed stupidity.

The Grand Dragon of my state lives in my town. He wields no power these days, but he had it once, and the town should recall that fact with shame.

The Panther tales are both black and white. There is no "black experience" intended. But memories still make the Panther Vs. the Klan idea one of the better ones in recent years of "relevant comix." Congrats, Don. You have captured the ugly side of America's bicentennial, and in a raw lyricism it does not deserve. And Billy has found the ways of illustrating it all with the touch of realism it needs.

Helmsman Collins
(no address given)

We had intended a more comprehensive view of America than merely this one aspect of American existence, Mr. Collins.

One final thanks to all of you out there who supported us and loved T'Challa and Monica, Kevin and the Lynnes, not to mention the rest, as much as we did.

Be kind to each other...be kind to yourselves.

And one final time, hang in there.

DAREDEVIL ANNUAL
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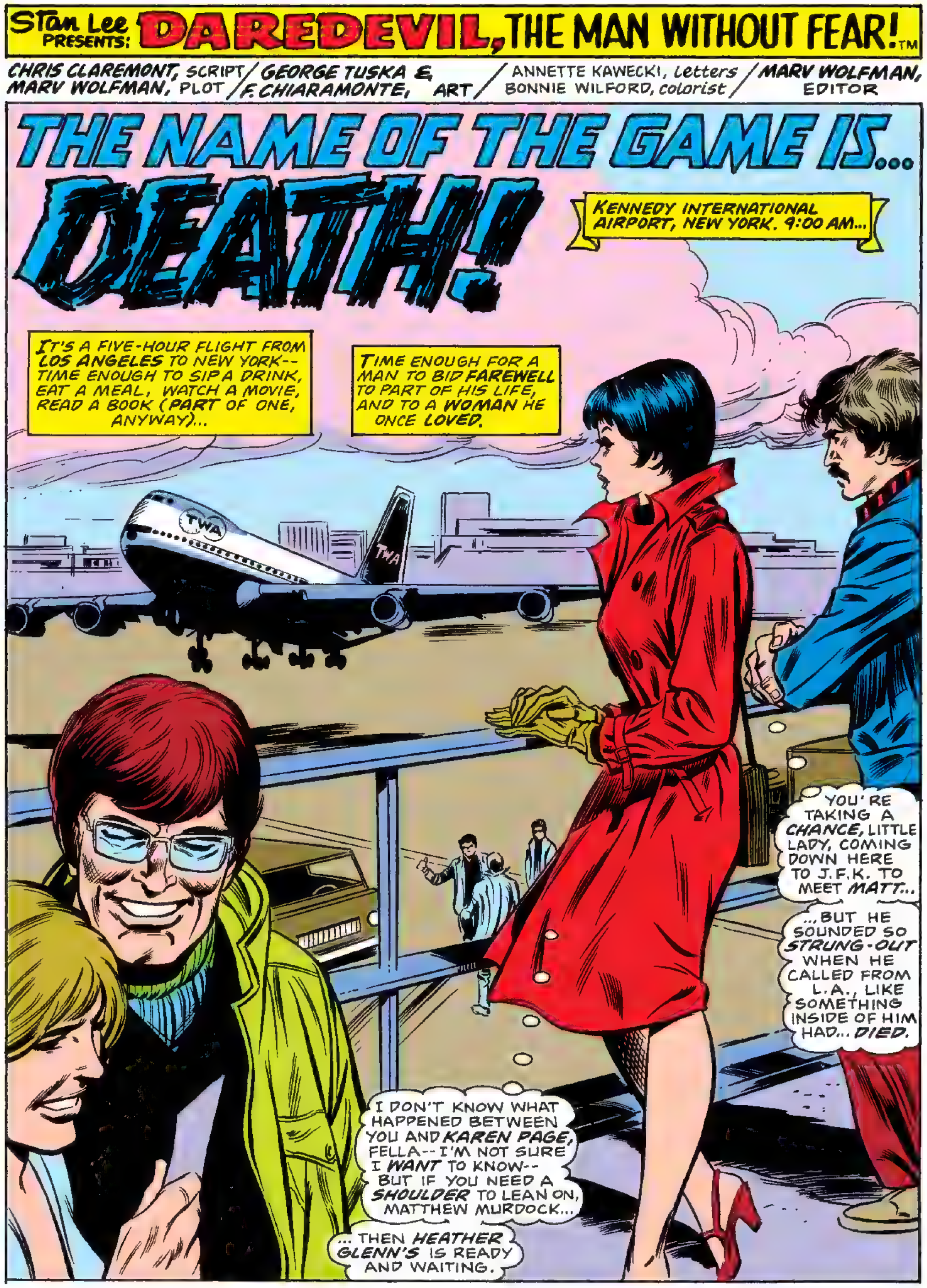
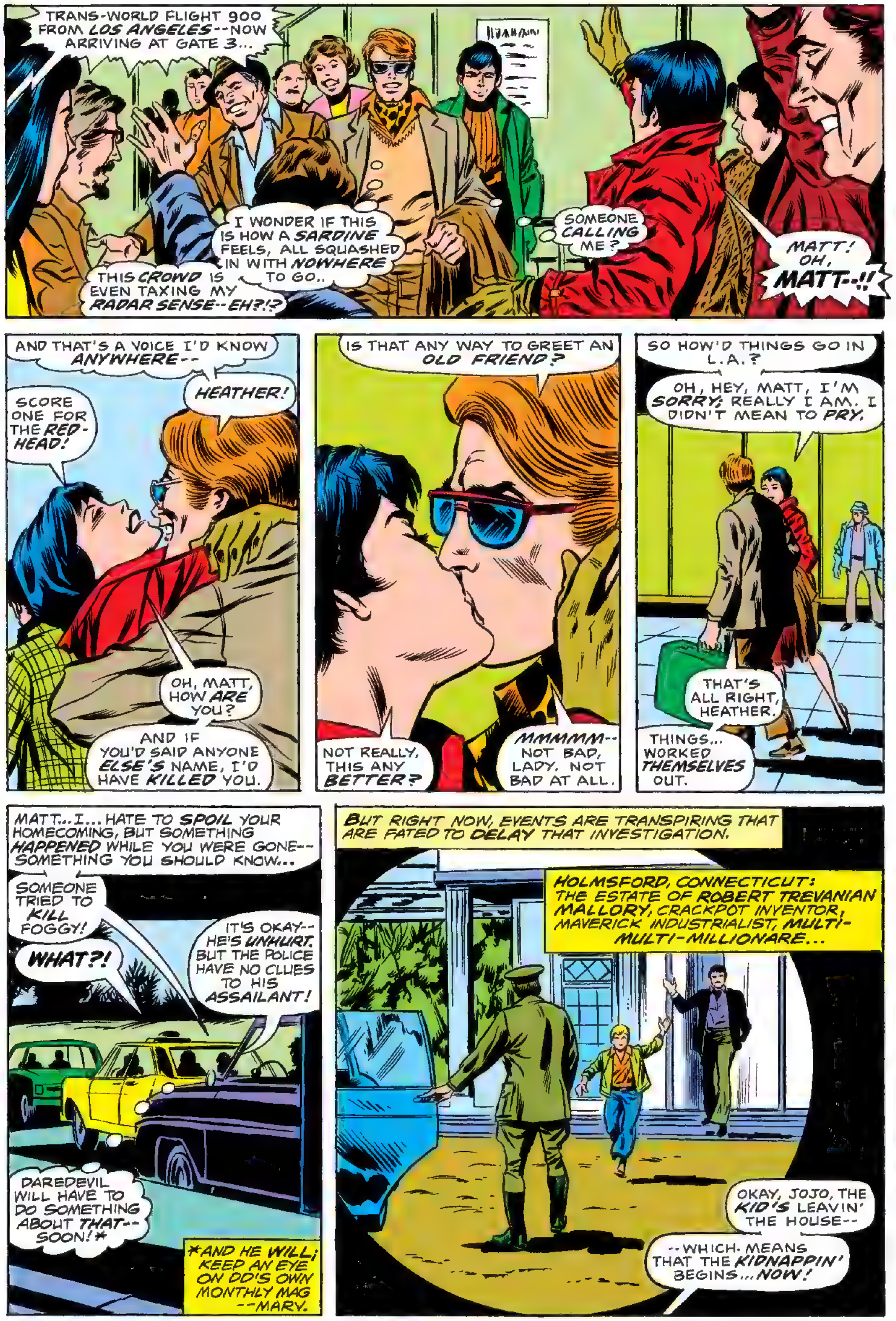
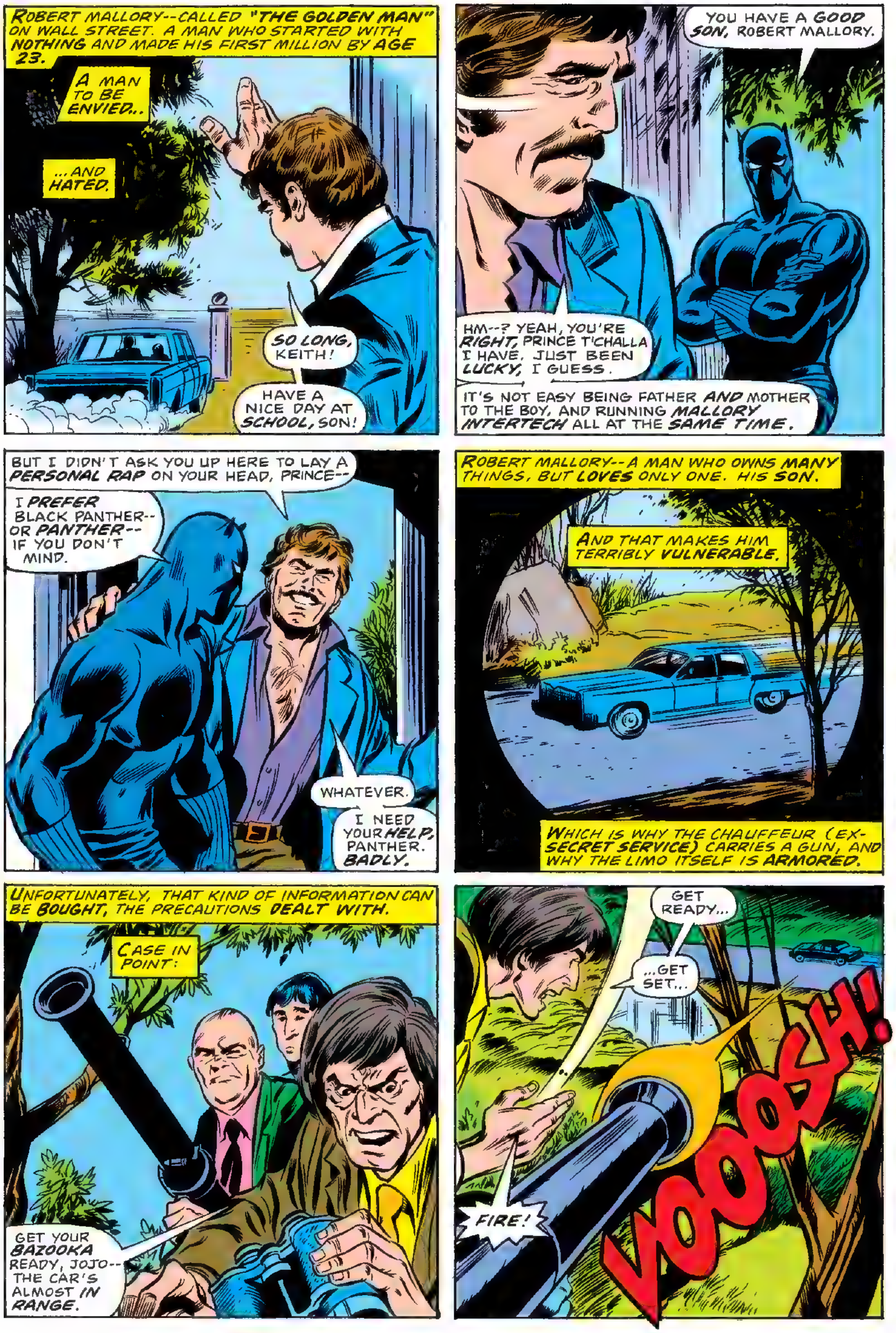
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
KING-SIZE ANNUAL!
ALL NEW!
DAREDEVIL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR TRAPPED IN A THREE-WAY FIGHT TO THE FINISH WITH THE BLACK PANTHER AND NAMOR, THE SAVAGE SUB-MARINER!
WIN OR LOSE-- THE NAME OF THE GAME IS DEATH!

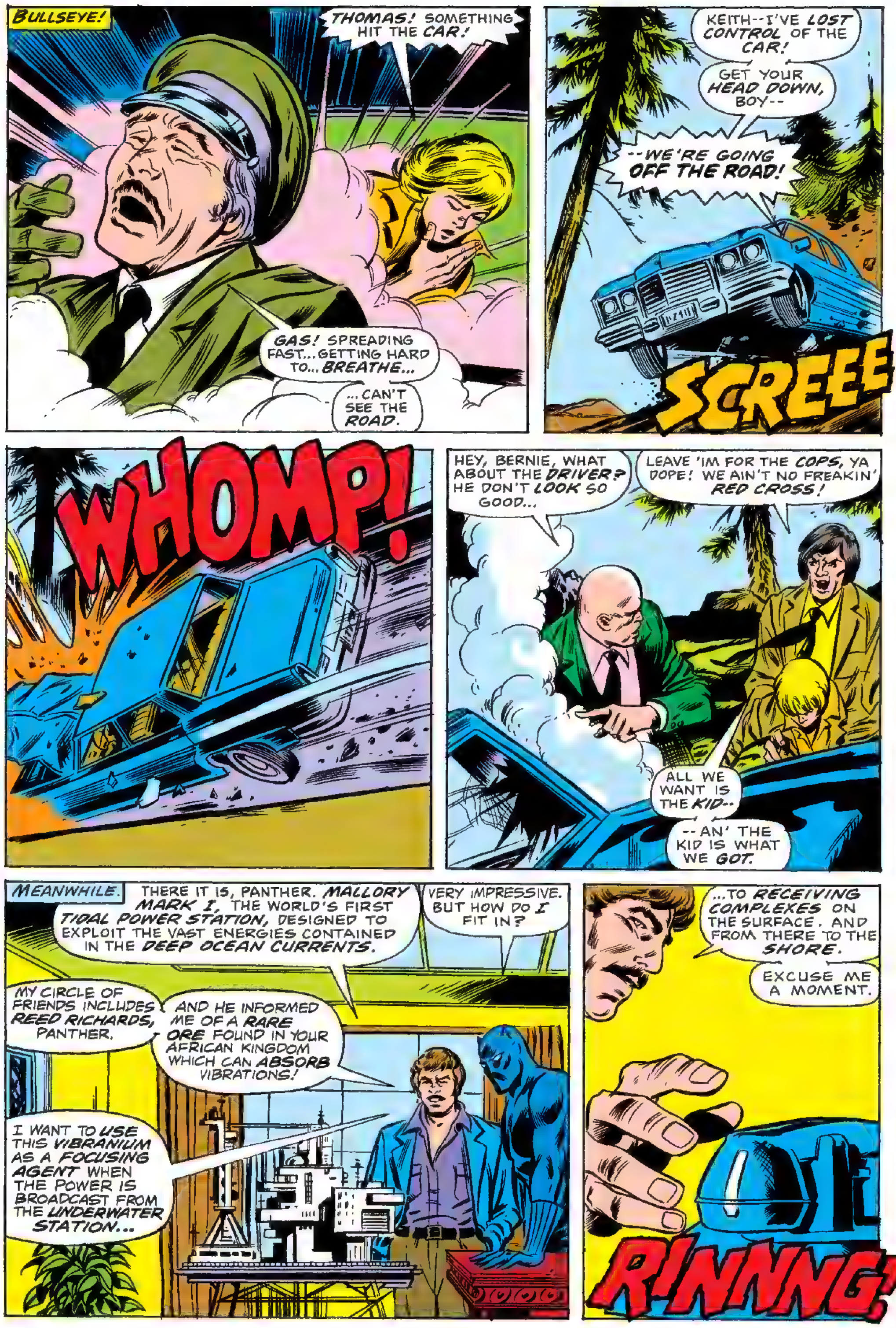


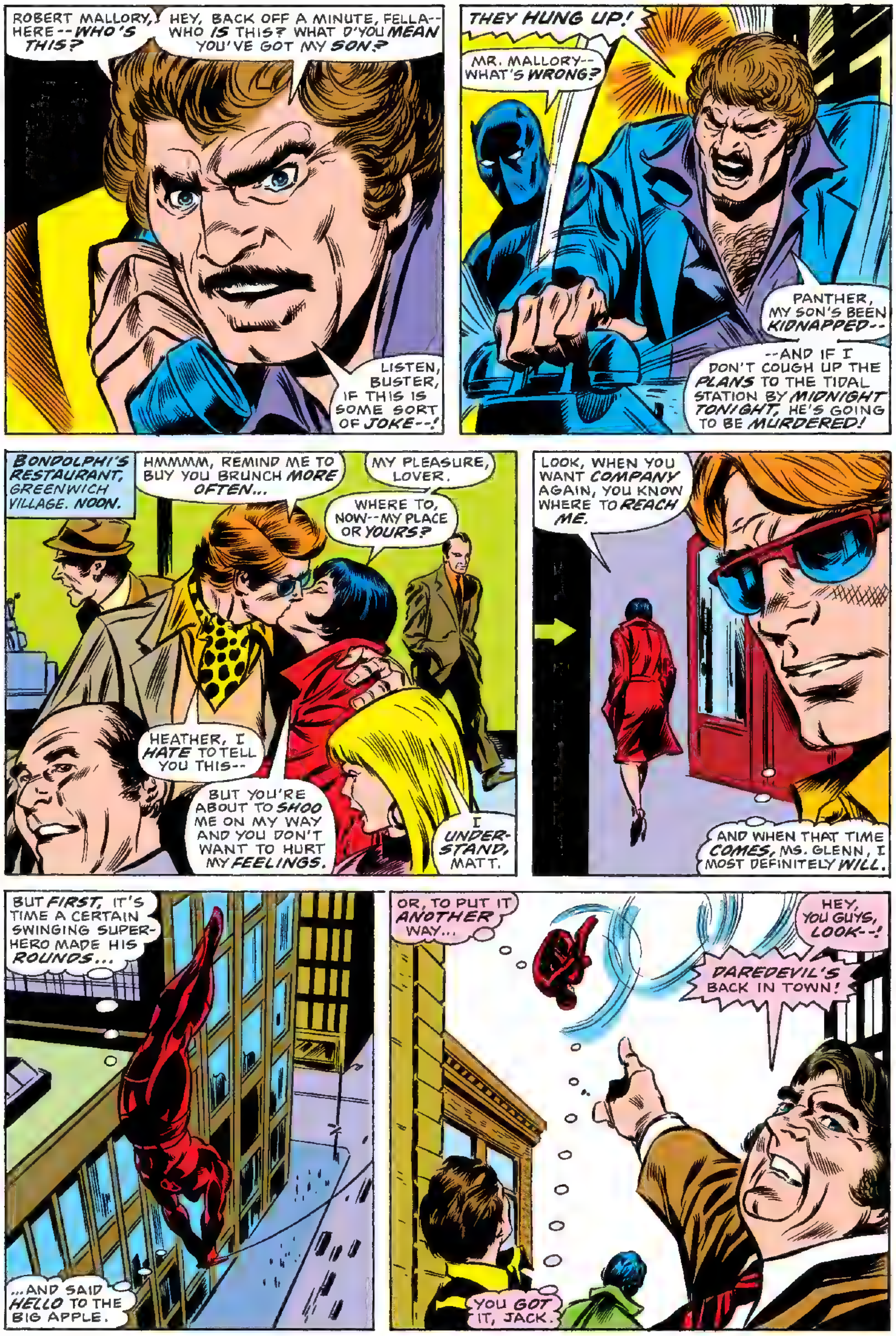
Stan Lee PRESENTS: DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!™
CHRIS CLAREMONT, SCRIPT / MARV WOLFMAN, PLOT / GEORGE TUSKA & F. CHIARAMONTE, ART / ANNETTE KAWECKI, letters / BONNIE WILFORD, colorist / MARV WOLFMAN, EDITOR
THE NAME OF THE GAME IS... DEATH!
KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NEW YORK. 9:00 AM...
IT'S A FIVE-HOUR FLIGHT FROM LOS ANGELES TO NEW YORK-- TIME ENOUGH TO SIP A DRINK, EAT A MEAL, WATCH A MOVIE, READ A BOOK (PART OF ONE, ANYWAY)...
TIME ENOUGH FOR A MAN TO BID FAREWELL TO PART OF HIS LIFE, AND TO A WOMAN HE ONCE LOVED.
YOU'RE TAKING A CHANCE, LITTLE LADY, COMING DOWN HERE TO J.F.K. TO MEET MATT...
...BUT HE SOUNDED SO STRUNG-OUT WHEN HE CALLED FROM L.A., LIKE SOMETHING INSIDE OF HIM HAD... DIED.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND KAREN PAGE, FELLA-- I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO KNOW-- BUT IF YOU NEED A SHOULDER TO LEAN ON, MATTHEW MURDOCK...
...THEN HEATHER GLENN'S IS READY AND WAITING.

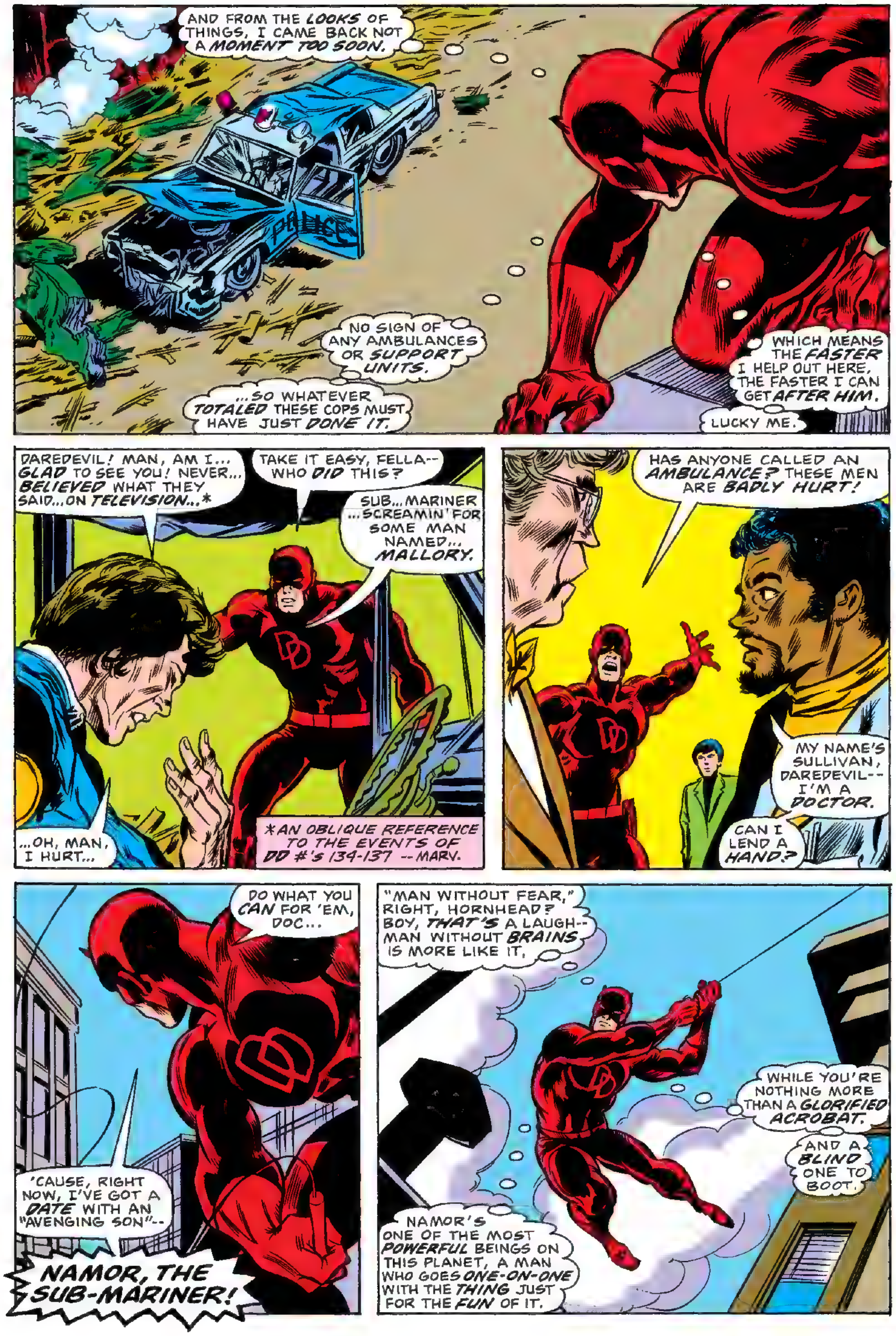

TRANS-WORLD FLIGHT 900 FROM LOS ANGELES--NOW ARRIVING AT GATE 3...
I WONDER IF THIS IS HOW A SARDINE FEELS, ALL SQUASHED IN WITH NOWHERE TO GO..
THIS CROWD IS EVEN TAXING MY RADAR SENSE--EH?!?
SOMEONE CALLING ME?
MATT! OH, MATT--!!
AND THAT'S A VOICE I'D KNOW ANYWHERE--
HEATHER!
SCORE ONE FOR THE RED-HEAD!
OH, MATT, HOW ARE YOU?
AND IF YOU'D SAID ANYONE ELSE'S NAME, I'D HAVE KILLED YOU.
IS THAT ANY WAY TO GREET AN OLD FRIEND?
NOT REALLY. THIS ANY BETTER?
MMMMM-- NOT BAD, LADY. NOT BAD AT ALL.
SO HOW'D THINGS GO IN L.A.?
THINGS... WORKED THEMSELVES OUT.
OH, HEY, MATT, I'M SORRY; REALLY I AM. I DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, HEATHER.
MATT...I...HATE TO SPOIL YOUR HOMECOMING, BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE GONE--SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW...
SOMEONE TRIED TO KILL FOGGY!
WHAT?!
IT'S OKAY--HE'S UNHURT. BUT THE POLICE HAVE NO CLUES TO HIS ASSAILANT!
DAREDEVIL WILL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT--SOON!*
*AND HE WILL; KEEP AN EYE ON DD'S OWN MONTHLY MAG --MARV.
BUT RIGHT NOW, EVENTS ARE TRANSPIRING THAT ARE FATED TO DELAY THAT INVESTIGATION.
HOLMSFORD, CONNECTICUT: THE ESTATE OF ROBERT TREVANIAN MALLORY, CRACKPOT INVENTOR, MAVERICK INDUSTRIALIST, MULTI-MULTI-MILLIONARE...
OKAY, JOJO, THE KID'S LEAVIN' THE HOUSE--
--WHICH MEANS THAT THE KIDNAPPIN' BEGINS...NOW!

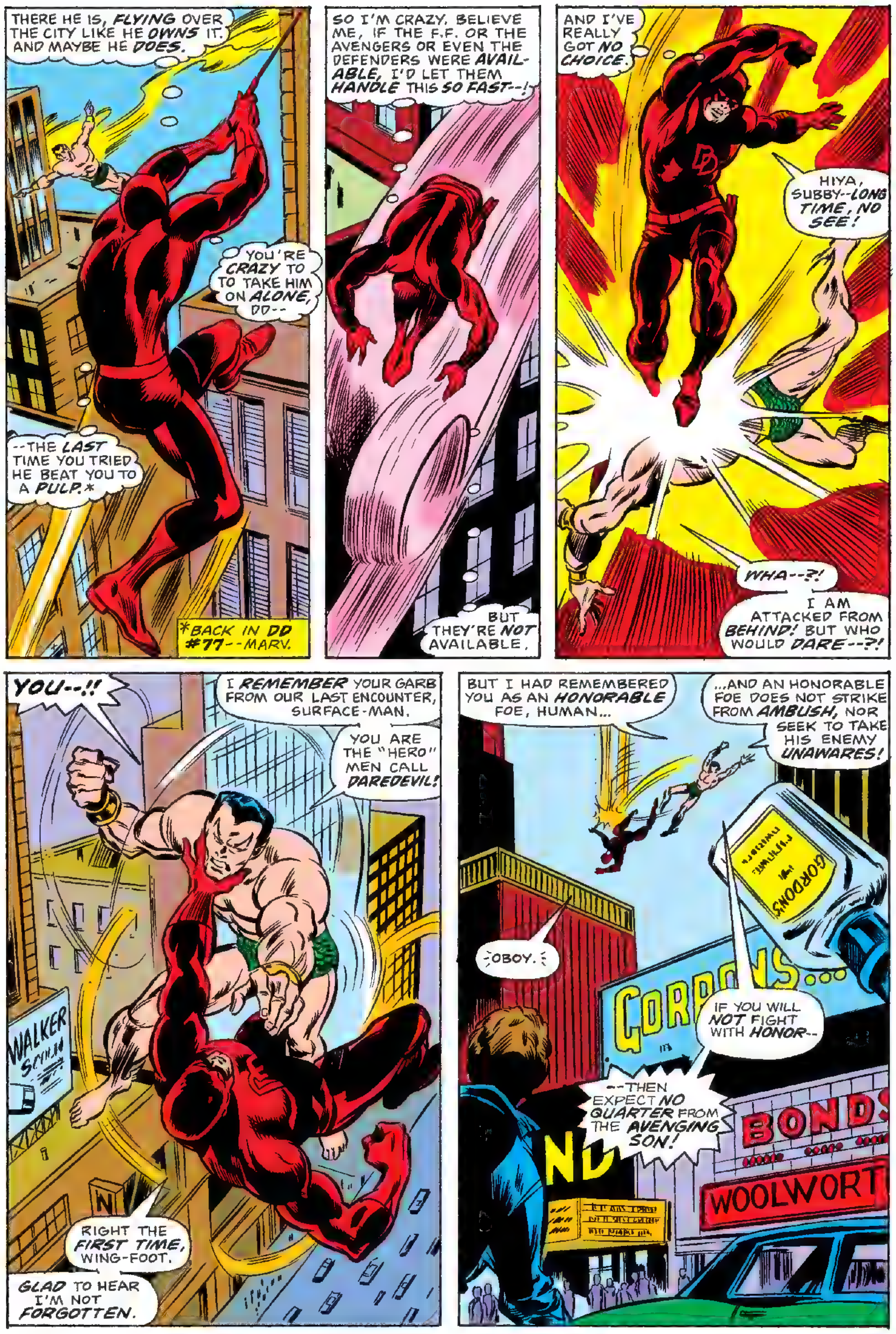


ROBERT MALLORY--CALLED "THE GOLDEN MAN" ON WALL STREET. A MAN WHO STARTED WITH NOTHING AND MADE HIS FIRST MILLION BY AGE 23.
A MAN TO BE ENVIED...
...AND HATED.
SO LONG, KEITH!
HAVE A NICE DAY AT SCHOOL, SON!
YOU HAVE A GOOD SON, ROBERT MALLORY.
HM--? YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT, PRINCE T'CHALLA. I HAVE. JUST BEEN LUCKY, I GUESS.
IT'S NOT EASY BEING FATHER AND MOTHER TO THE BOY, AND RUNNING MALLORY INTERTECH ALL AT THE SAME TIME.
BUT I DIDN'T ASK YOU UP HERE TO LAY A PERSONAL RAP ON YOUR HEAD, PRINCE--
I PREFER BLACK PANTHER-- OR PANTHER-- IF YOU DON'T MIND.
WHATEVER.
I NEED YOUR HELP, PANTHER. BADLY.
ROBERT MALLORY-- A MAN WHO OWNS MANY THINGS, BUT LOVES ONLY ONE. HIS SON.
AND THAT MAKES HIM TERRIBLY VULNERABLE.
WHICH IS WHY THE CHAUFFEUR (EX-SECRET SERVICE) CARRIES A GUN, AND WHY THE LIMO ITSELF IS ARMORED.
UNFORTUNATELY, THAT KIND OF INFORMATION CAN BE BOUGHT, THE PRECAUTIONS DEALT WITH.
CASE IN POINT:
GET YOUR BAZOOKA READY, JOJO-- THE CAR'S ALMOST IN RANGE.
GET READY...
...GET SET...
FIRE!
VOOOOSH!

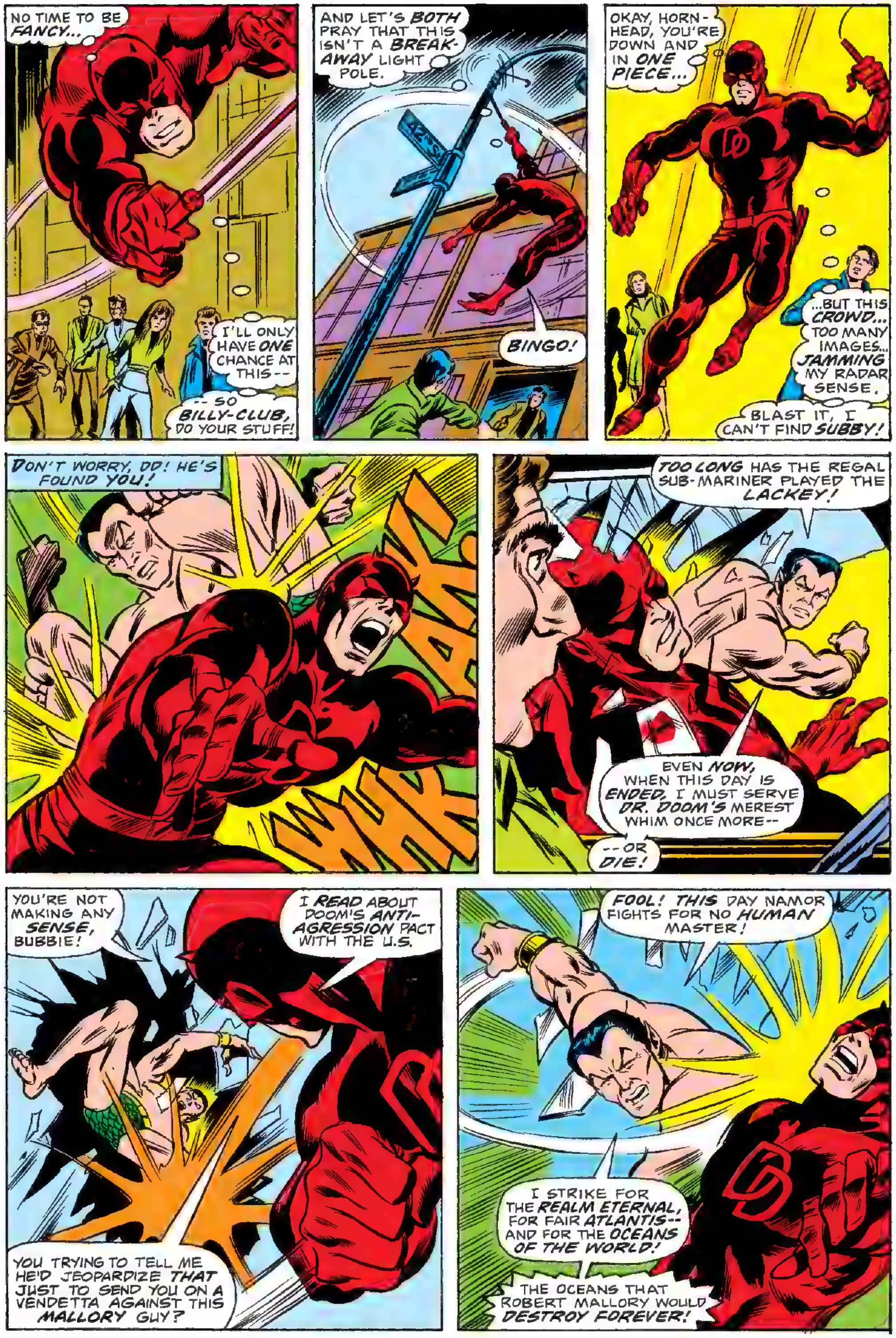

BULLSEYE!
THOMAS! SOMETHING HIT THE CAR!
GAS! SPREADING FAST...GETTING HARD TO... BREATHE...
...CAN'T SEE THE ROAD.
KEITH--I'VE LOST CONTROL OF THE CAR!
GET YOUR HEAD DOWN, BOY--
--WE'RE GOING OFF THE ROAD!
SCREEE
WHOMP!
HEY, BERNIE, WHAT ABOUT THE DRIVER? HE DON'T LOOK SO GOOD...
LEAVE 'IM FOR THE COPS, YA DOPE! WE AIN'T NO FREAKIN' RED CROSS!
ALL WE WANT IS THE KID--
--AN' THE KID IS WHAT WE GOT.
MEANWHILE.
THERE IT IS, PANTHER. MALLORY MARK I, THE WORLD'S FIRST TIDAL POWER STATION, DESIGNED TO EXPLOIT THE VAST ENERGIES CONTAINED IN THE DEEP OCEAN CURRENTS.
VERY IMPRESSIVE. BUT HOW DO I FIT IN?
MY CIRCLE OF FRIENDS INCLUDES REED RICHARDS, PANTHER.
AND HE INFORMED ME OF A RARE ORE FOUND IN YOUR AFRICAN KINGDOM WHICH CAN ABSORB VIBRATIONS!
I WANT TO USE THIS VIBRANIUM AS A FOCUSING AGENT WHEN THE POWER IS BROADCAST FROM THE UNDERWATER STATION...
...TO RECEIVING COMPLEXES ON THE SURFACE, AND FROM THERE TO THE SHORE.
EXCUSE ME A MOMENT.
RINNNG!


ROBERT MALLORY, HERE--WHO'S THIS?
HEY, BACK OFF A MINUTE, FELLA--WHO IS THIS? WHAT D'YOU MEAN YOU'VE GOT MY SON?
LISTEN, BUSTER, IF THIS IS SOME SORT OF JOKE--!
THEY HUNG UP!
MR. MALLORY--WHAT'S WRONG?
PANTHER, MY SON'S BEEN KIDNAPPED--
--AND IF I DON'T COUGH UP THE PLANS TO THE TIDAL STATION BY MIDNIGHT TONIGHT, HE'S GOING TO BE MURDERED!
BONDOLPHI'S RESTAURANT, GREENWICH VILLAGE. NOON.
HMMMM, REMIND ME TO BUY YOU BRUNCH MORE OFTEN...
MY PLEASURE, LOVER.
WHERE TO, NOW--MY PLACE OR YOURS?
HEATHER, I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS--
BUT YOU'RE ABOUT TO SHOO ME ON MY WAY AND YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT MY FEELINGS.
I UNDER-STAND, MATT.
LOOK, WHEN YOU WANT COMPANY AGAIN, YOU KNOW WHERE TO REACH ME.
AND WHEN THAT TIME COMES, MS. GLENN, I MOST DEFINITELY WILL.
BUT FIRST, IT'S TIME A CERTAIN SWINGING SUPER-HERO MADE HIS ROUNDS...
...AND SAID HELLO TO THE BIG APPLE.
OR, TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY...
HEY, YOU GUYS, LOOK--!
DAREDEVIL'S BACK IN TOWN!
YOU GOT IT, JACK.

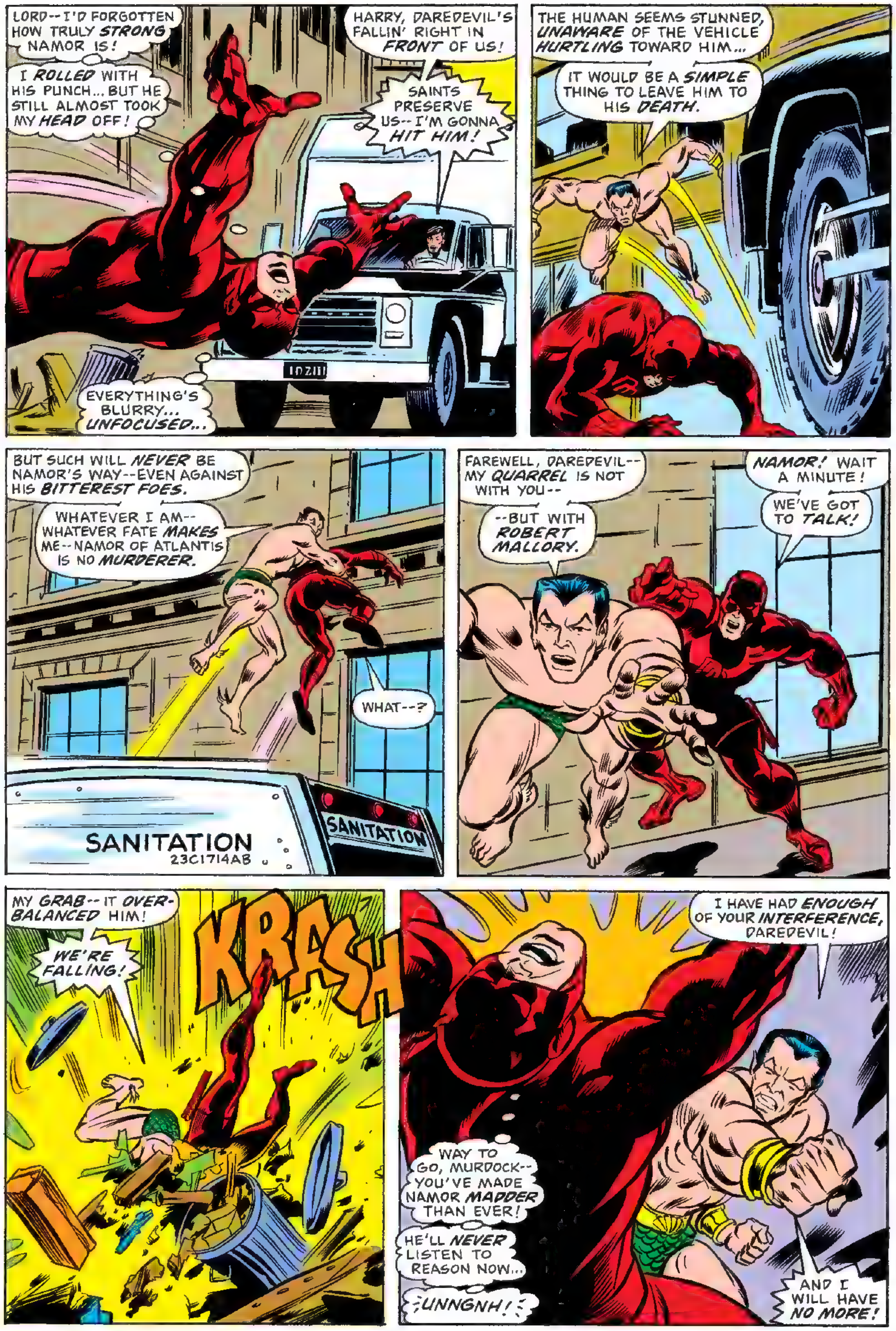

AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, I CAME BACK NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.
NO SIGN OF ANY AMBULANCES OR SUPPORT UNITS.
...SO WHATEVER TOTALED THESE COPS MUST HAVE JUST DONE IT.
WHICH MEANS THE FASTER I HELP OUT HERE, THE FASTER I CAN GET AFTER HIM.
LUCKY ME.
DAREDEVIL! MAN, AM I... GLAD TO SEE YOU! NEVER... BELIEVED WHAT THEY SAID...ON TELEVISION...*
TAKE IT EASY, FELLA-- WHO DID THIS?
SUB...MARINER ...SCREAMIN' FOR SOME MAN NAMED... MALLORY.
...OH, MAN, I HURT...
*AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO THE EVENTS OF DD #'s 134-137 --MARV.
HAS ANYONE CALLED AN AMBULANCE? THESE MEN ARE BADLY HURT!
MY NAME'S SULLIVAN, DAREDEVIL-- I'M A DOCTOR.
CAN I LEND A HAND?
DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR 'EM, DOC...
'CAUSE, RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT A DATE WITH AN "AVENGING SON"--
NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER!
"MAN WITHOUT FEAR," RIGHT, HORNHEAD? BOY, THAT'S A LAUGH-- MAN WITHOUT BRAINS IS MORE LIKE IT,
WHILE YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A GLORIFIED ACROBAT.
AND A BLIND ONE TO BOOT.
NAMOR'S ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON THIS PLANET, A MAN WHO GOES ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE THING JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT.

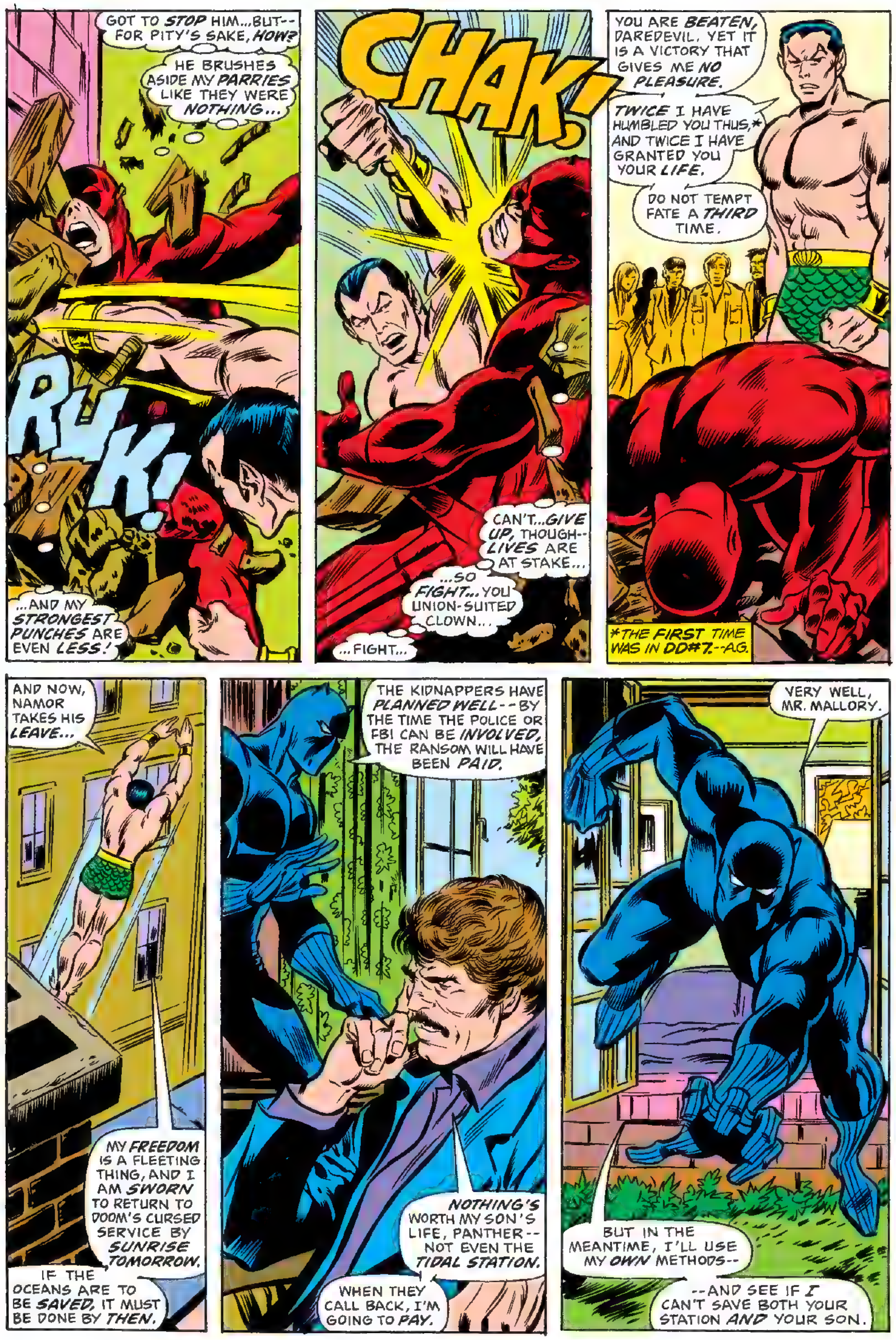


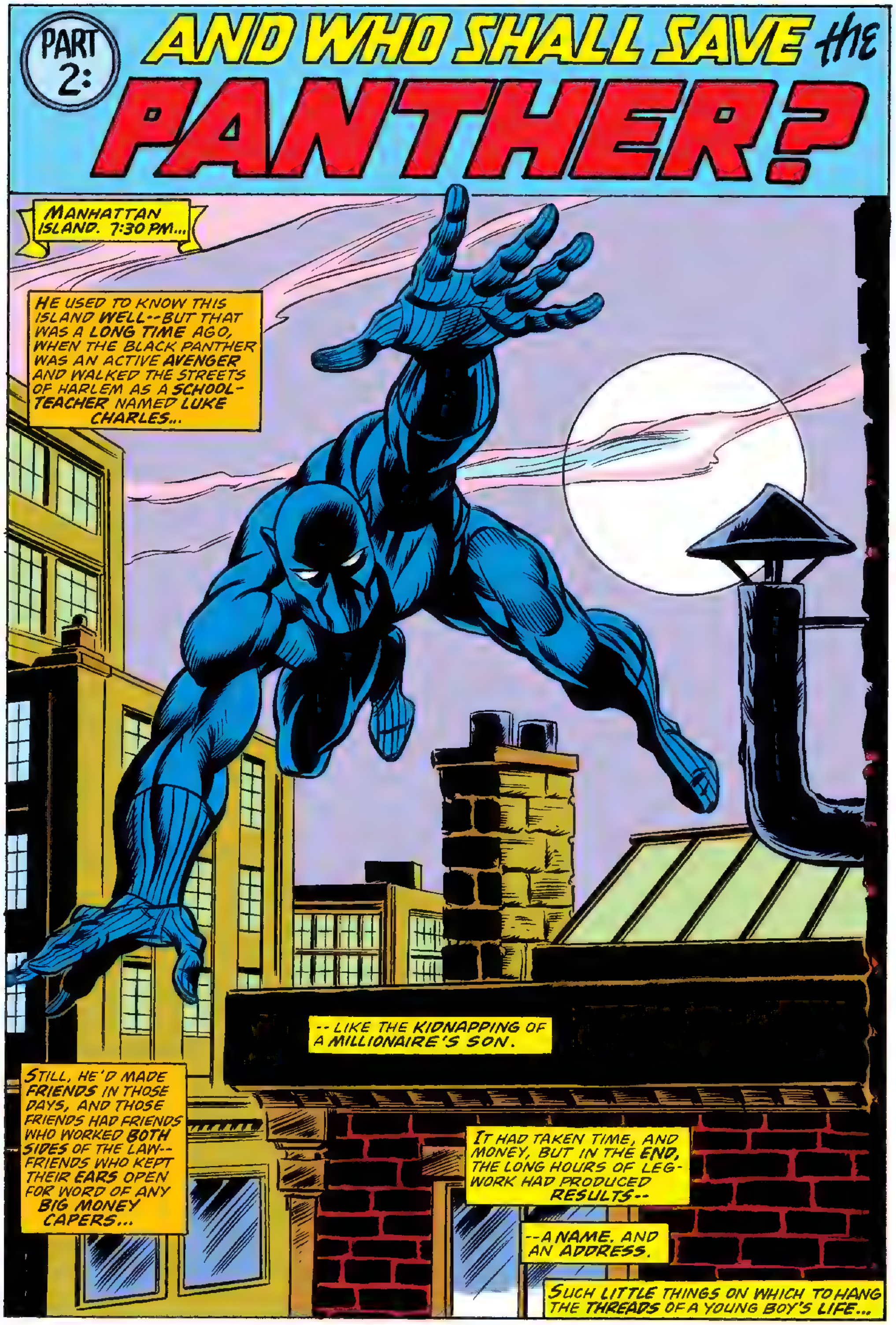
THERE HE IS, FLYING OVER THE CITY LIKE HE OWNS IT. AND MAYBE HE DOES.
YOU'RE CRAZY TO TO TAKE HIM ON ALONE, DD--
--THE LAST TIME YOU TRIED HE BEAT YOU TO A PULP.*
*BACK IN DD #77--MARV.
SO I'M CRAZY. BELIEVE ME, IF THE F.F. OR THE AVENGERS OR EVEN THE DEFENDERS WERE AVAIL-ABLE, I'D LET THEM HANDLE THIS SO FAST--!
BUT THEY'RE NOT AVAILABLE.
AND I'VE REALLY GOT NO CHOICE.
HIYA, SUBBY--LONG TIME, NO SEE!
WHA--?!
I AM ATTACKED FROM BEHIND! BUT WHO WOULD DARE--?!
YOU--!!
I REMEMBER YOUR GARB FROM OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, SURFACE-MAN.
YOU ARE THE "HERO" MEN CALL DAREDEVIL!
RIGHT THE FIRST TIME, WING-FOOT.
GLAD TO HEAR I'M NOT FORGOTTEN.
BUT I HAD REMEMBERED YOU AS AN HONORABLE FOE, HUMAN...
...AND AN HONORABLE FOE DOES NOT STRIKE FROM AMBUSH, NOR SEEK TO TAKE HIS ENEMY UNAWARES!
OBOY.
IF YOU WILL NOT FIGHT WITH HONOR--
--THEN EXPECT NO QUARTER FROM THE AVENGING SON!
GORDONS
BONDS
WOOLWORT



NO TIME TO BE FANCY...
I'LL ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE AT THIS--
--SO BILLY-CLUB, DO YOUR STUFF!
AND LET'S BOTH PRAY THAT THIS ISN'T A BREAK-AWAY LIGHT POLE.
BINGO!
OKAY, HORN-HEAD, YOU'RE DOWN AND IN ONE PIECE...
...BUT THIS CROWD... TOO MANY IMAGES... JAMMING MY RADAR SENSE.
BLAST IT, I CAN'T FIND SUBBY!
DON'T WORRY, DD! HE'S FOUND YOU!
TOO LONG HAS THE REGAL SUB-MARINER PLAYED THE LACKEY!
EVEN NOW, WHEN THIS DAY IS ENDED, I MUST SERVE DR. DOOM'S MEREST WHIM ONCE MORE--
--OR DIE!
YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE, BUBBIE!
I READ ABOUT DOOM'S ANTI-AGRESSION PACT WITH THE U.S.
YOU TRYING TO TELL ME HE'D JEOPARDIZE THAT JUST TO SEND YOU ON A VENDETTA AGAINST THIS MALLORY GUY?
FOOL! THIS DAY NAMOR FIGHTS FOR NO HUMAN MASTER!
I STRIKE FOR THE REALM ETERNAL, FOR FAIR ATLANTIS-- AND FOR THE OCEANS OF THE WORLD!
THE OCEANS THAT ROBERT MALLORY WOULD DESTROY FOREVER!

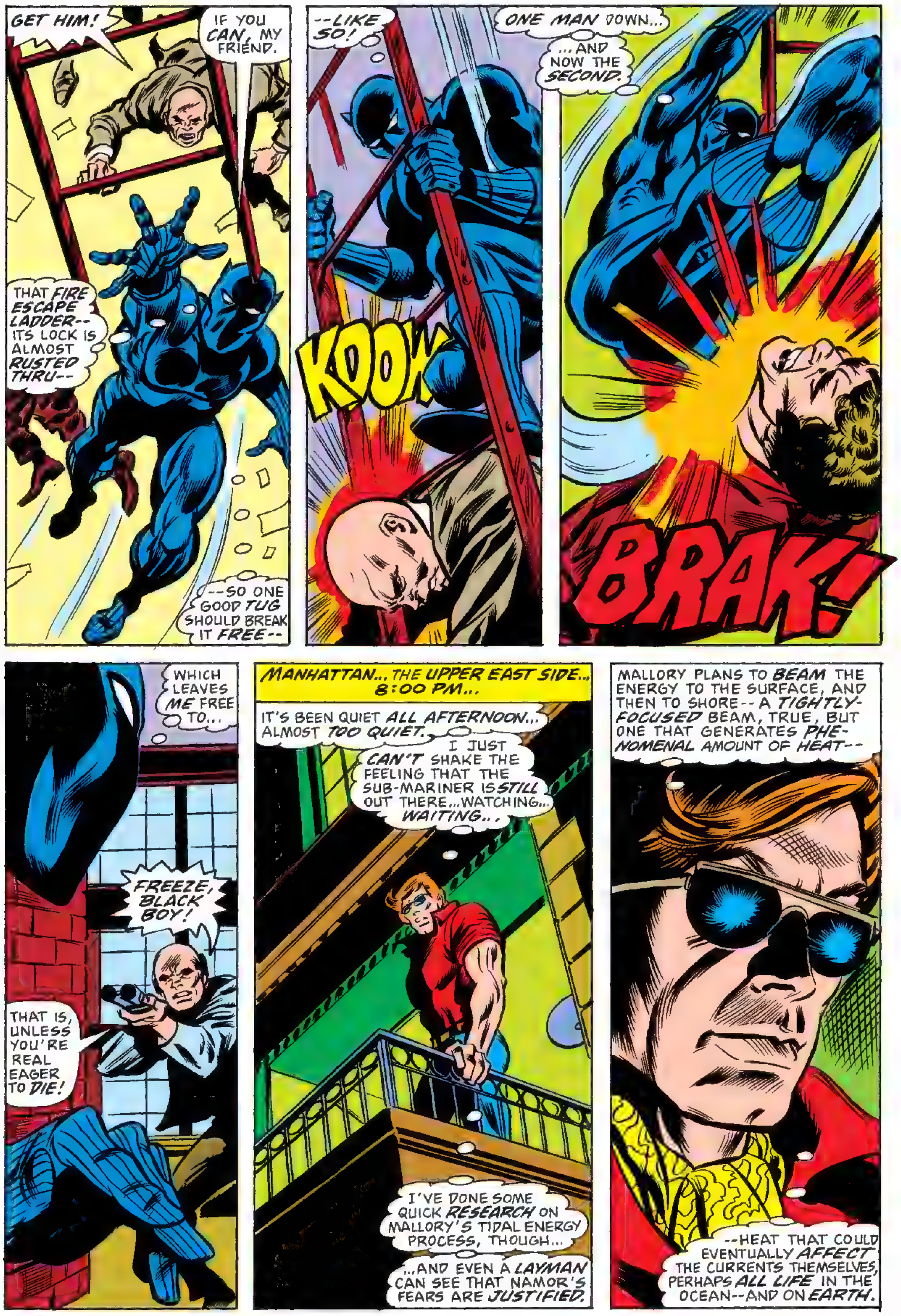

LORD--I'D FORGOTTEN HOW TRULY STRONG NAMOR IS!
I ROLLED WITH HIS PUNCH... BUT HE STILL ALMOST TOOK MY HEAD OFF!
HARRY, DAREDEVIL'S FALLIN' RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!
SAINTS PRESERVE US-- I'M GONNA HIT HIM!
EVERYTHING'S BLURRY... UNFOCUSED...
THE HUMAN SEEMS STUNNED, UNAWARE OF THE VEHICLE HURTLING TOWARD HIM...
IT WOULD BE A SIMPLE THING TO LEAVE HIM TO HIS DEATH.
BUT SUCH WILL NEVER BE NAMOR'S WAY--EVEN AGAINST HIS BITTEREST FOES.
WHATEVER I AM-- WHATEVER FATE MAKES ME--NAMOR OF ATLANTIS IS NO MURDERER.
WHAT--?
SANITATION
23C1714AB
SANITATION
FAREWELL, DAREDEVIL-- MY QUARREL IS NOT WITH YOU--
--BUT WITH ROBERT MALLORY.
NAMOR! WAIT A MINUTE!
WE'VE GOT TO TALK!
MY GRAB-- IT OVER-BALANCED HIM!
WE'RE FALLING!
KRASH
I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR INTERFERENCE, DAREDEVIL!
WAY TO GO, MURDOCK-- YOU'VE MADE NAMOR MADDER THAN EVER!
HE'LL NEVER LISTEN TO REASON NOW...
UNNGNH!
AND I WILL HAVE NO MORE!

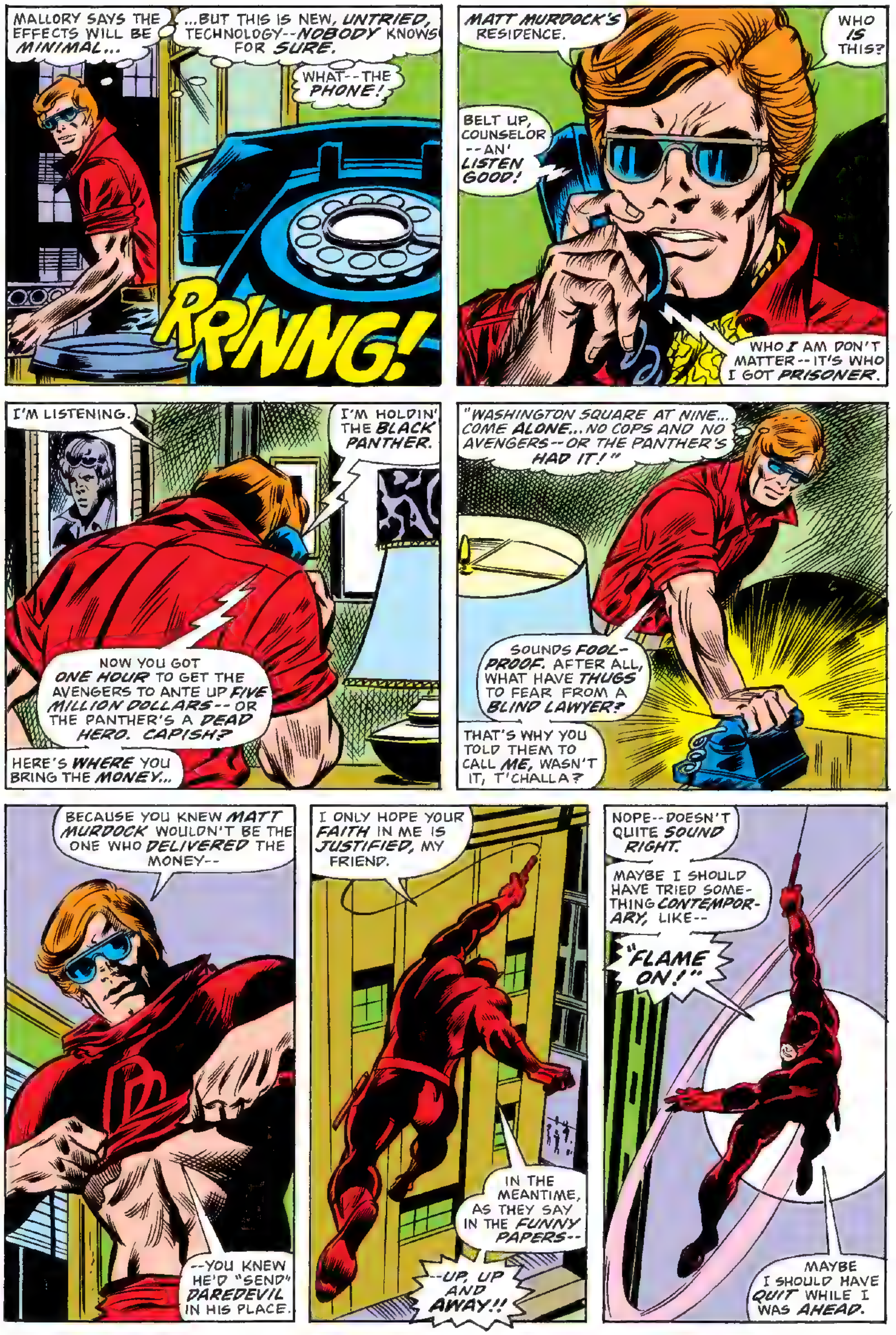

GOT TO STOP HIM...BUT--FOR PITY'S SAKE, HOW?
HE BRUSHES ASIDE MY PARRIES LIKE THEY WERE NOTHING...
RUK!
...AND MY STRONGEST PUNCHES ARE EVEN LESS!
CHAK!
CAN'T...GIVE UP, THOUGH--LIVES ARE AT STAKE...
...SO FIGHT... YOU UNION-SUITED CLOWN...
...FIGHT...
YOU ARE BEATEN, DAREDEVIL. YET IT IS A VICTORY THAT GIVES ME NO PLEASURE.
TWICE I HAVE HUMBLED YOU THUS,* AND TWICE I HAVE GRANTED YOU YOUR LIFE.
DO NOT TEMPT FATE A THIRD TIME.
*THE FIRST TIME WAS IN DD#7.--AG.
AND NOW, NAMOR TAKES HIS LEAVE...
MY FREEDOM IS A FLEETING THING, AND I AM SWORN TO RETURN TO DOOM'S CURSED SERVICE BY SUNRISE TOMORROW.
IF THE OCEANS ARE TO BE SAVED, IT MUST BE DONE BY THEN.
THE KIDNAPPERS HAVE PLANNED WELL--BY THE TIME THE POLICE OR FBI CAN BE INVOLVED, THE RANSOM WILL HAVE BEEN PAID.
NOTHING'S WORTH MY SON'S LIFE, PANTHER--NOT EVEN THE TIDAL STATION.
WHEN THEY CALL BACK, I'M GOING TO PAY.
VERY WELL, MR. MALLORY.
BUT IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL USE MY OWN METHODS--
--AND SEE IF I CAN'T SAVE BOTH YOUR STATION AND YOUR SON.


PART 2: AND WHO SHALL SAVE the PANTHER?
MANHATTAN ISLAND. 7:30 PM...
HE USED TO KNOW THIS ISLAND WELL--BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN THE BLACK PANTHER WAS AN ACTIVE AVENGER AND WALKED THE STREETS OF HARLEM AS A SCHOOL-TEACHER NAMED LUKE CHARLES...
STILL, HE'D MADE FRIENDS IN THOSE DAYS, AND THOSE FRIENDS HAD FRIENDS WHO WORKED BOTH SIDES OF THE LAW--FRIENDS WHO KEPT THEIR EARS OPEN FOR WORD OF ANY BIG MONEY CAPERS...
--LIKE THE KIDNAPPING OF A MILLIONAIRE'S SON.
IT HAD TAKEN TIME, AND MONEY, BUT IN THE END, THE LONG HOURS OF LEG-WORK HAD PRODUCED RESULTS--
--A NAME, AND AN ADDRESS.
SUCH LITTLE THINGS ON WHICH TO HANG THE THREADS OF A YOUNG BOY'S LIFE...

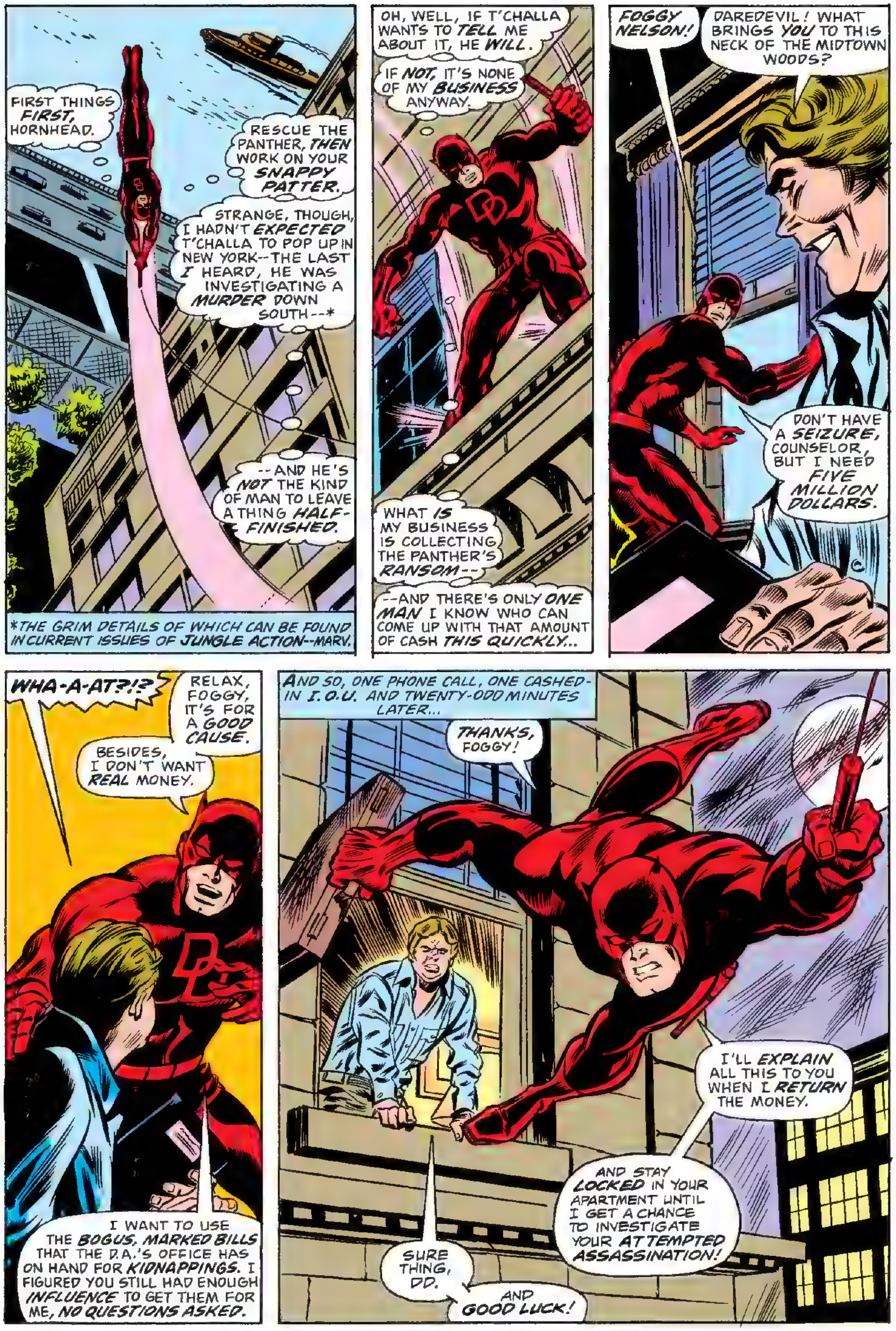
UPPER WEST SIDE...BETWEEN BROADWAY AND AMSTERDAM--NOT ONE OF NEW YORK'S FINER NEIGHBORHOODS.
GOT TO MOVE FAST NOW, FOR KEITH'S SAKE.
TIME'S RUNNING SHORT...
I ONLY PRAY THAT THE INFORMATION BILLY CARVER* GAVE ME WAS ACCURATE...
*ANYONE REMEMBER HIM FROM DD #69?--MARV.
YOU WERE WELL PAID, BERNARD.
AND FROM THE SOUNDS OF THINGS INSIDE--
--I THINK IT IS.
BULL!
WE WERE HIRED TO SNATCH A KID, TOLD THERE'D BE NO PROBLEMS...
SO ALL OF A SUDDEN I HEAR ON THE STREET THAT MALLORY'S GOT THE BLACK PANTHER AFTER US!
COPS ARE ONE THING, COSTA--AN AVENGER'S SOMETHING ELSE!
STOP ACTING LIKE A FOOL, BERNARD--
--RUFFIO COSTA IS MORE THAN ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE PANTHER.
FINE! YOU DEAL WITH HIM--BUT I WANT TO BE OUTTA THE COUNTRY WHEN THE AVENGERS STOMP YOU INTO THE GROUND.
I WANT WHAT'S COMIN' TO ME, COSTA--NOW!!
WHAM!
AND YOU SHALL HAVE IT.
BUT FIRST, I INTEND TO HAVE MY AFTER-DINNER TEA.
WILLIS...

GOT'CHA, BOSS!
BERNIE!!
AARGH!
BHROOM!
MR. COSTA, PLEASE--WE DIDN'T MAKE NO TROUBLE--THIS WAS ALL BERNIE'S IDEA!
DON'T SHOOT--PLEASE!!
MR. COSTA--?
SUCH LOYALTY IS ADMIRABLE, WILLIS--LET THEM LIVE.
BUT UNDERSTAND, YOU MEN--THE FAMILY HAS ITS EYE ON YOU NOW.
GET OUT OF LINE ONCE AND YOU'LL GET JUST WHAT BERNIE GOT.
NICE MAN, THIS RUFFIO COSTA--
--A MAN I'D ENJOY PUTTING OUT OF BUSINESS.
BUT MY PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS THE BOY-- EH?!!
DON'T MOVE, BUDDY, DON'T EVEN BREATHE...
...OR I'LL BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF!
THE RESPONSE IS INSTINCTIVE...IMMEDIATE...
...DEADLY!
I TRUST YOU GENTLEMEN WILL EXCUSE ME--
--IF THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT GO MEEKLY TO THE SLAUGHTER.

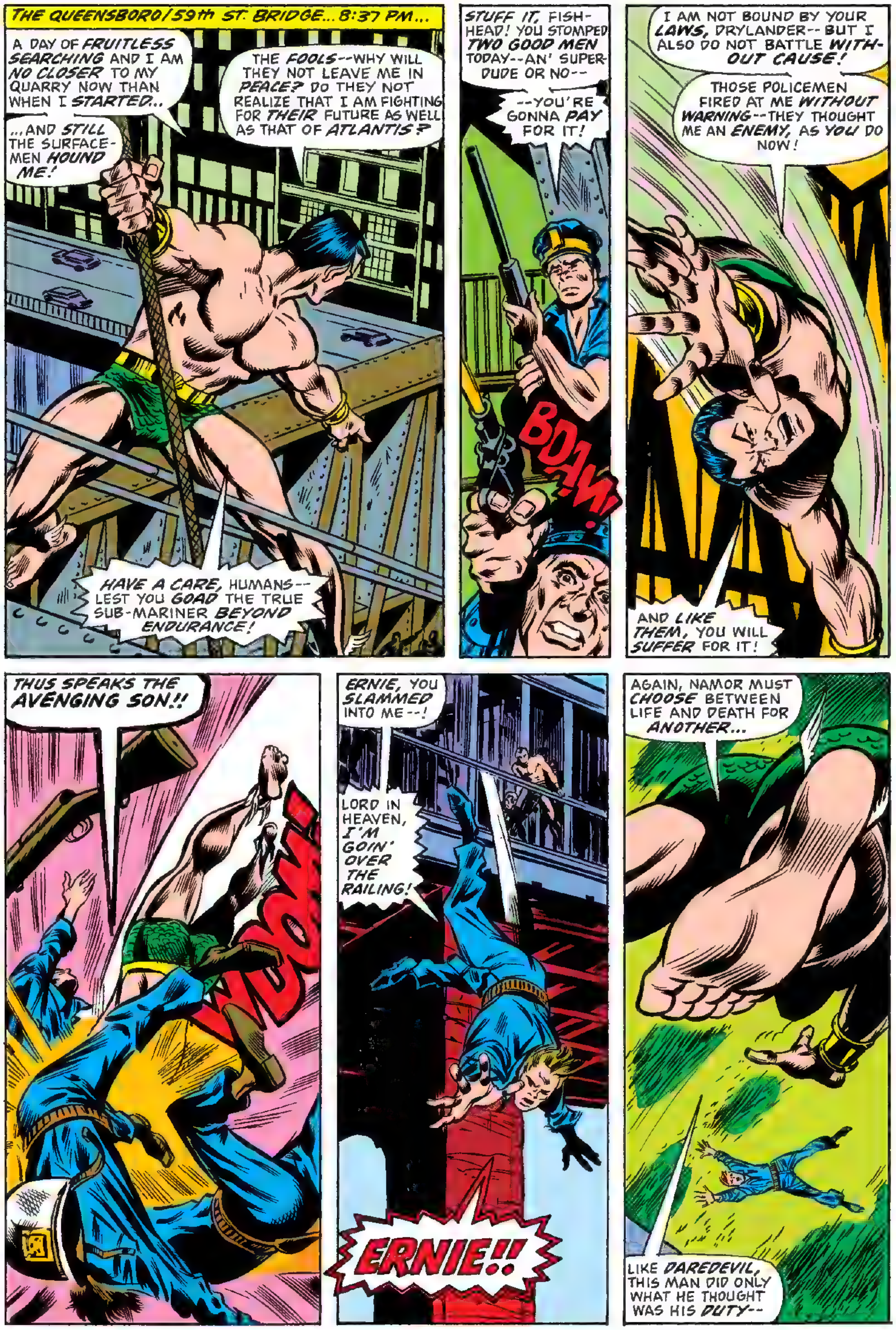

GET HIM!
IF YOU CAN, MY FRIEND.
THAT FIRE ESCAPE LADDER-- ITS LOCK IS ALMOST RUSTED THRU--
--SO ONE GOOD TUG SHOULD BREAK IT FREE--
--LIKE SO!
KOOK
ONE MAN DOWN...
...AND NOW THE SECOND.
BRAK!
WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO...
FREEZE, BLACK BOY!
THAT IS, UNLESS YOU'RE REAL EAGER TO DIE!
MANHATTAN... THE UPPER EAST SIDE... 8:00 PM...
IT'S BEEN QUIET ALL AFTERNOON... ALMOST TOO QUIET.
I JUST CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT THE SUB-MARINER IS STILL OUT THERE... WATCHING... WAITING...
I'VE DONE SOME QUICK RESEARCH ON MALLORY'S TIDAL ENERGY PROCESS, THOUGH...
...AND EVEN A LAYMAN CAN SEE THAT NAMOR'S FEARS ARE JUSTIFIED.
MALLORY PLANS TO BEAM THE ENERGY TO THE SURFACE, AND THEN TO SHORE-- A TIGHTLY-FOCUSED BEAM, TRUE, BUT ONE THAT GENERATES PHENOMENAL AMOUNT OF HEAT--
--HEAT THAT COULD EVENTUALLY AFFECT THE CURRENTS THEMSELVES, PERHAPS ALL LIFE IN THE OCEAN--AND ON EARTH.



MALLORY SAYS THE EFFECTS WILL BE MINIMAL...
...BUT THIS IS NEW, UNTRIED, TECHNOLOGY--NOBODY KNOWS FOR SURE.
WHAT--THE PHONE!
RRING!
MATT MURDOCK'S RESIDENCE.
WHO IS THIS?
BELT UP, COUNSELOR--AN' LISTEN GOOD!
WHO I AM DON'T MATTER--IT'S WHO I GOT PRISONER.
I'M LISTENING.
I'M HOLDIN' THE BLACK PANTHER.
NOW YOU GOT ONE HOUR TO GET THE AVENGERS TO ANTE UP FIVE MILLION DOLLARS--OR THE PANTHER'S A DEAD HERO. CAPISH?
HERE'S WHERE YOU BRING THE MONEY...
"WASHINGTON SQUARE AT NINE... COME ALONE...NO COPS AND NO AVENGERS--OR THE PANTHER'S HAD IT!"
SOUNDS FOOL-PROOF. AFTER ALL, WHAT HAVE THUGS TO FEAR FROM A BLIND LAWYER?
THAT'S WHY YOU TOLD THEM TO CALL ME, WASN'T IT, T'CHALLA?
BECAUSE YOU KNEW MATT MURDOCK WOULDN'T BE THE ONE WHO DELIVERED THE MONEY--
--YOU KNEW HE'D "SEND" DAREDEVIL IN HIS PLACE.
I ONLY HOPE YOUR FAITH IN ME IS JUSTIFIED, MY FRIEND.
IN THE MEANTIME, AS THEY SAY IN THE FUNNY PAPERS--
--UP, UP AND AWAY!!
NOPE--DOESN'T QUITE SOUND RIGHT.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TRIED SOMETHING CONTEMPORARY, LIKE--
"FLAME ON!"
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE QUIT WHILE I WAS AHEAD.

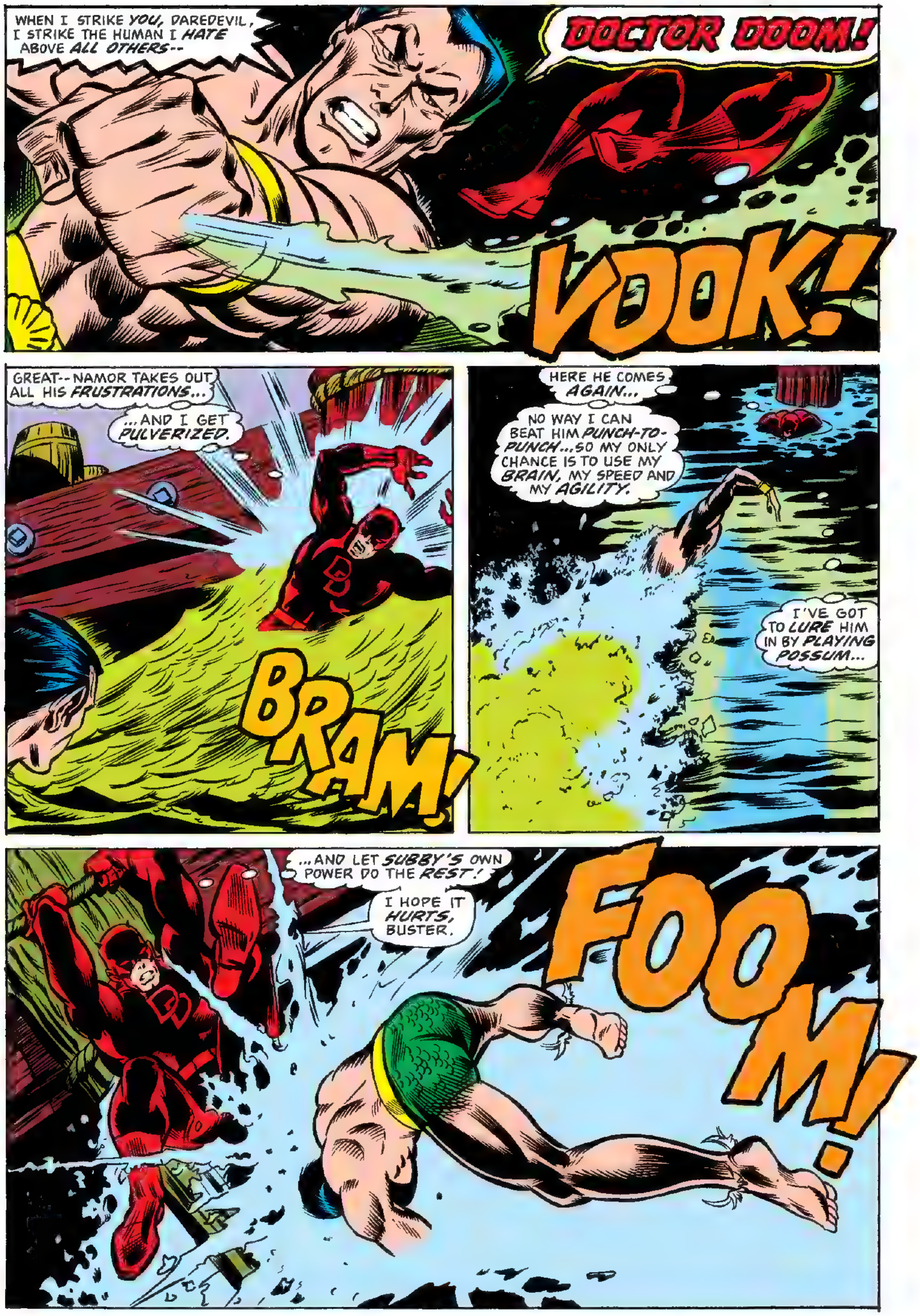


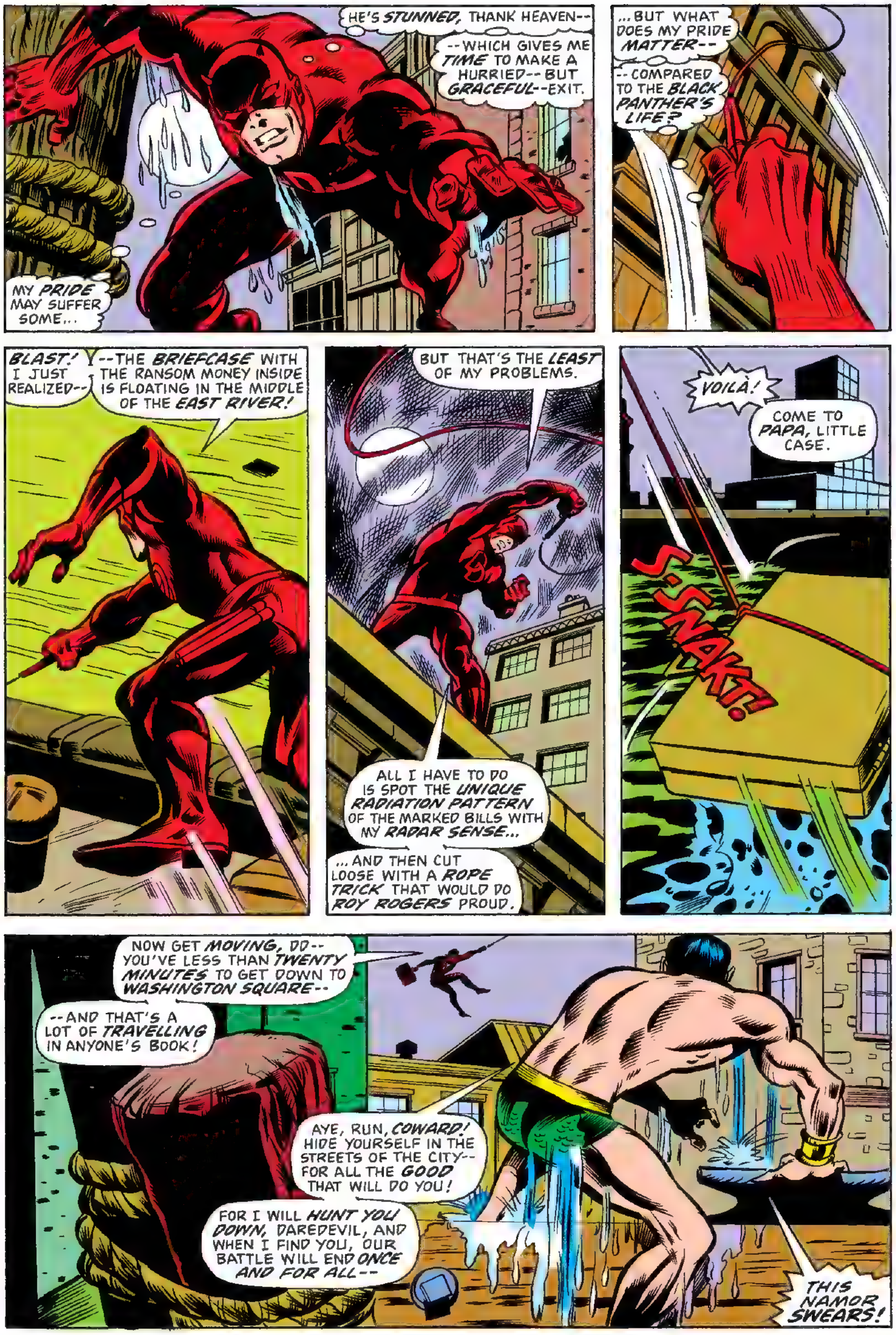
FIRST THINGS FIRST, HORNHEAD.
RESCUE THE PANTHER, THEN WORK ON YOUR SNAPPY PATTER.
STRANGE, THOUGH, I HADN'T EXPECTED T'CHALLA TO POP UP IN NEW YORK--THE LAST I HEARD, HE WAS INVESTIGATING A MURDER DOWN SOUTH--*
--AND HE'S NOT THE KIND OF MAN TO LEAVE A THING HALF-FINISHED.
*THE GRIM DETAILS OF WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN CURRENT ISSUES OF JUNGLE ACTION--MARV.
OH, WELL, IF T'CHALLA WANTS TO TELL ME ABOUT IT, HE WILL.
IF NOT, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS ANYWAY.
WHAT IS MY BUSINESS IS COLLECTING THE PANTHER'S RANSOM--
--AND THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN I KNOW WHO CAN COME UP WITH THAT AMOUNT OF CASH THIS QUICKLY...
FOGGY NELSON!
DAREDEVIL! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THIS NECK OF THE MIDTOWN WOODS?
DON'T HAVE A SEIZURE, COUNSELOR, BUT I NEED FIVE MILLION DOLLARS.
WHA-A-AT?!?
RELAX, FOGGY, IT'S FOR A GOOD CAUSE.
BESIDES, I DON'T WANT REAL MONEY.
I WANT TO USE THE BOGUS, MARKED BILLS THAT THE D.A.'S OFFICE HAS ON HAND FOR KIDNAPPINGS. I FIGURED YOU STILL HAD ENOUGH INFLUENCE TO GET THEM FOR ME, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
AND SO, ONE PHONE CALL, ONE CASHED-IN I.O.U. AND TWENTY-ODD MINUTES LATER...
THANKS, FOGGY!
I'LL EXPLAIN ALL THIS TO YOU WHEN I RETURN THE MONEY.
AND STAY LOCKED IN YOUR APARTMENT UNTIL I GET A CHANCE TO INVESTIGATE YOUR ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION!
SURE THING, DD.
AND GOOD LUCK!



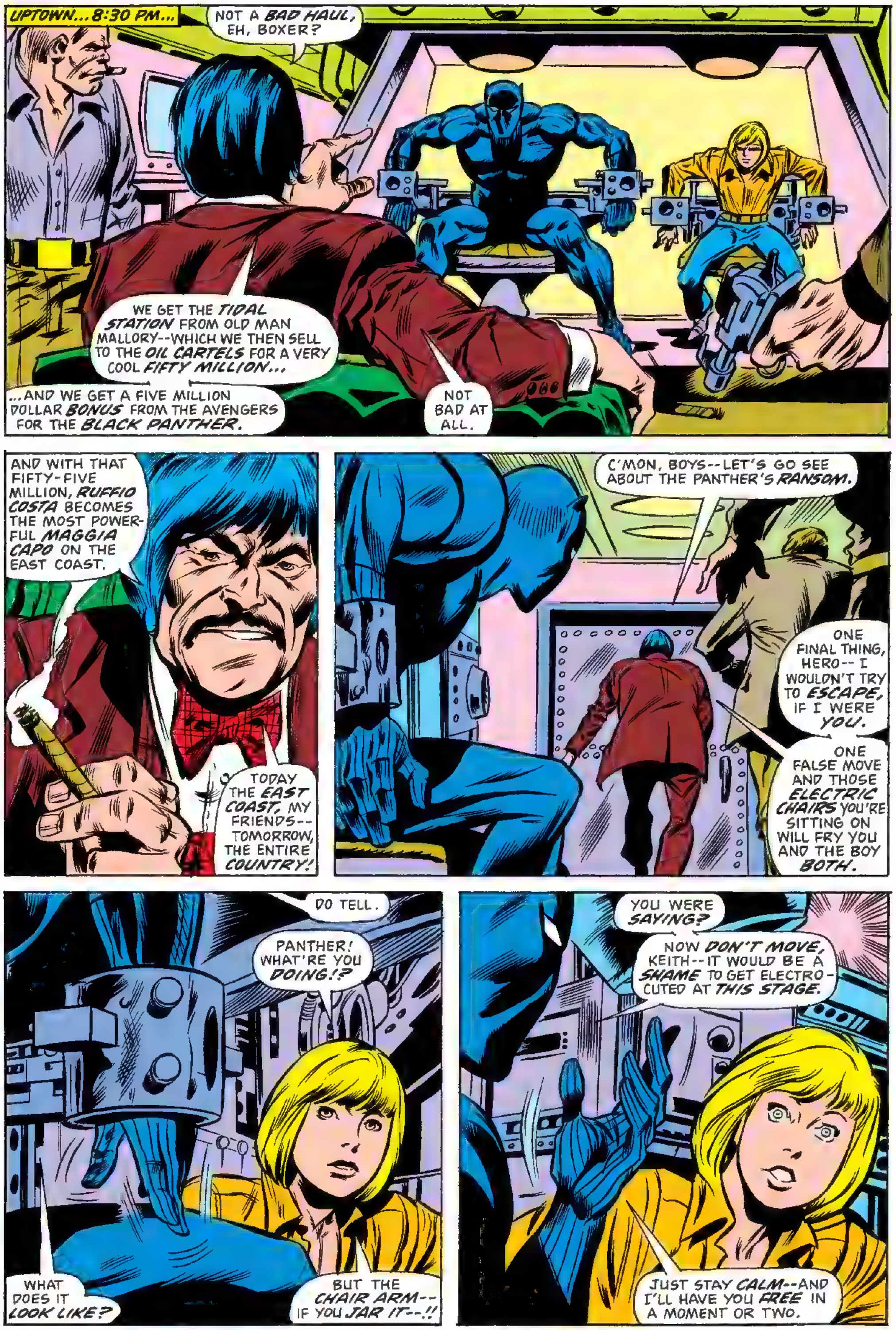
THE QUEENSBORO/59th ST. BRIDGE... 8:37 PM...
A DAY OF FRUITLESS SEARCHING AND I AM NO CLOSER TO MY QUARRY NOW THAN WHEN I STARTED...
...AND STILL THE SURFACE-MEN HOUND ME!
THE FOOLS--WHY WILL THEY NOT LEAVE ME IN PEACE? DO THEY NOT REALIZE THAT I AM FIGHTING FOR THEIR FUTURE AS WELL AS THAT OF ATLANTIS?
HAVE A CARE, HUMANS-- LEST YOU GOAD THE TRUE SUB-MARINER BEYOND ENDURANCE!
STUFF IT, FISH-HEAD! YOU STOMPED TWO GOOD MEN TODAY--AN' SUPER-DUDE OR NO--
--YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR IT!
BDAM!
I AM NOT BOUND BY YOUR LAWS, DRYLANDER-- BUT I ALSO DO NOT BATTLE WITH-OUT CAUSE!
THOSE POLICEMEN FIRED AT ME WITHOUT WARNING--THEY THOUGHT ME AN ENEMY, AS YOU DO NOW!
AND LIKE THEM, YOU WILL SUFFER FOR IT!
THUS SPEAKS THE AVENGING SON!!
WOOM!
ERNIE, YOU SLAMMED INTO ME--!
LORD IN HEAVEN, I'M GOIN' OVER THE RAILING!
ERNIE!!
AGAIN, NAMOR MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH FOR ANOTHER...
LIKE DAREDEVIL, THIS MAN DID ONLY WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS HIS DUTY--

--AND NAMOR WILL NOT LET HIM DIE FOR THAT!!
BUT PERHAPS I SPOKE TOO SOON-- I THINK OF DAREDEVIL AND HE APPEARS...
COULD THE POLICE HAVE SUMMONED HIM?
ARE THEY THAT DESPERATE?
GET YOU FROM MY SIGHT, DAREDEVIL-- TOO MANY OBSTACLES HAVE KEPT ME FROM MY GOAL THIS DAY!
MY TIME IS SHORT AND I AM IN NO MOOD TO BE FORGIVING!
OH, BROTHER-- OF ALL THE PEOPLE TO RUN INTO...
...AND, JUDGING FROM THE SOUND OF HIS HEART-BEAT, SUBBY'S READY TO BLOW ANY SECOND NOW!
NAMOR, WAIT A MINUTE...
I HAVE NO MORE MINUTES LEFT, HUMAN!
KLUD!
ROLL WITH THE PUNCH, DD-- MOVE IT, MAN, BEFORE--
UNNGNH!
NO RESPITE, HORNED ONE-- NO QUARTER!
BECAUSE WHEN I STRIKE YOU, I STRIKE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE HUNTED AND KILLED EVERYTHING THE SUB-MARINER HOLDS DEAR...
...THOSE WHO WOULD USE AND EXPLOIT THE MOTHER OCEAN, WHATEVER THE COST--THOSE WHO WOULD USE ME!


WHEN I STRIKE YOU, DAREDEVIL, I STRIKE THE HUMAN I HATE ABOVE ALL OTHERS--
DOCTOR DOOM!
VOOK!
GREAT--NAMOR TAKES OUT ALL HIS FRUSTRATIONS...
...AND I GET PULVERIZED.
BRAM!
HERE HE COMES AGAIN...
NO WAY I CAN BEAT HIM PUNCH-TO-PUNCH...SO MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO USE MY BRAIN, MY SPEED AND MY AGILITY.
I'VE GOT TO LURE HIM IN BY PLAYING POSSUM...
...AND LET SUBBY'S OWN POWER DO THE REST!
I HOPE IT HURTS, BUSTER.
FOOM!

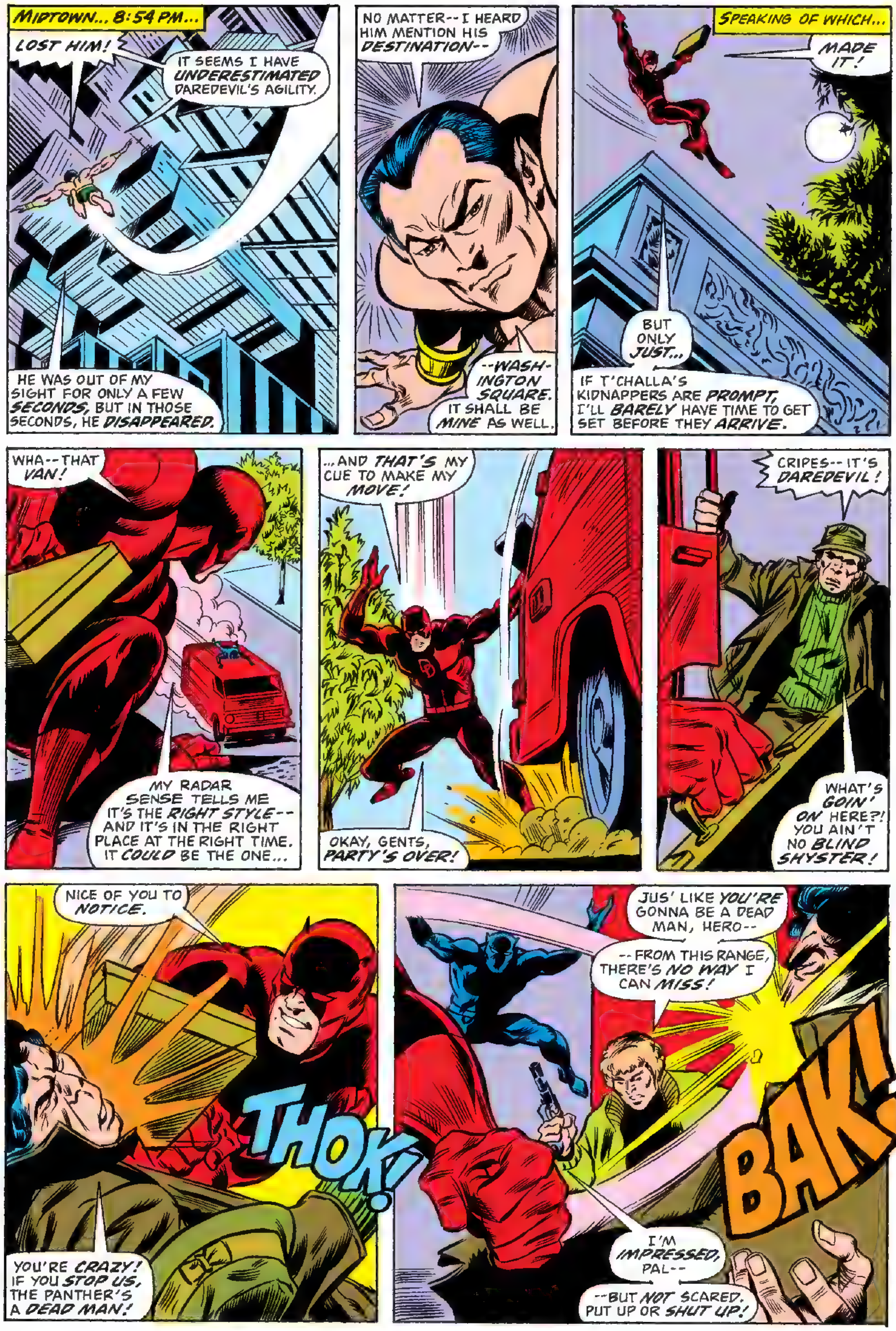


HE'S STUNNED, THANK HEAVEN--
--WHICH GIVES ME TIME TO MAKE A HURRIED-- BUT GRACEFUL--EXIT.
MY PRIDE MAY SUFFER SOME...
...BUT WHAT DOES MY PRIDE MATTER--
--COMPARED TO THE BLACK PANTHER'S LIFE?
BLAST! I JUST REALIZED--
--THE BRIEFCASE WITH THE RANSOM MONEY INSIDE IS FLOATING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EAST RIVER!
BUT THAT'S THE LEAST OF MY PROBLEMS.
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SPOT THE UNIQUE RADIATION PATTERN OF THE MARKED BILLS WITH MY RADAR SENSE...
...AND THEN CUT LOOSE WITH A ROPE TRICK THAT WOULD DO ROY ROGERS PROUD.
VOILÀ!
COME TO PAPA, LITTLE CASE.
S-SNAK!
NOW GET MOVING, DD-- YOU'VE LESS THAN TWENTY MINUTES TO GET DOWN TO WASHINGTON SQUARE--
--AND THAT'S A LOT OF TRAVELLING IN ANYONE'S BOOK!
AYE, RUN, COWARD! HIDE YOURSELF IN THE STREETS OF THE CITY-- FOR ALL THE GOOD THAT WILL DO YOU!
FOR I WILL HUNT YOU DOWN, DAREDEVIL, AND WHEN I FIND YOU, OUR BATTLE WILL END ONCE AND FOR ALL--
THIS NAMOR SWEARS!


UPTOWN...8:30 PM...
NOT A BAD HAUL, EH, BOXER?
WE GET THE TIDAL STATION FROM OLD MAN MALLORY--WHICH WE THEN SELL TO THE OIL CARTELS FOR A VERY COOL FIFTY MILLION...
...AND WE GET A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR BONUS FROM THE AVENGERS FOR THE BLACK PANTHER.
NOT BAD AT ALL.
AND WITH THAT FIFTY-FIVE MILLION, RUFFIO COSTA BECOMES THE MOST POWERFUL MAGGIA CAPO ON THE EAST COAST.
TODAY THE EAST COAST, MY FRIENDS-- TOMORROW, THE ENTIRE COUNTRY!
C'MON, BOYS--LET'S GO SEE ABOUT THE PANTHER'S RANSOM.
ONE FINAL THING, HERO-- I WOULDN'T TRY TO ESCAPE, IF I WERE YOU.
ONE FALSE MOVE AND THOSE ELECTRIC CHAIRS YOU'RE SITTING ON WILL FRY YOU AND THE BOY BOTH.
DO TELL.
PANTHER! WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
BUT THE CHAIR ARM-- IF YOU JAR IT--!!
YOU WERE SAYING?
NOW DON'T MOVE, KEITH-- IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO GET ELECTROCUTED AT THIS STAGE.
JUST STAY CALM--AND I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN A MOMENT OR TWO.

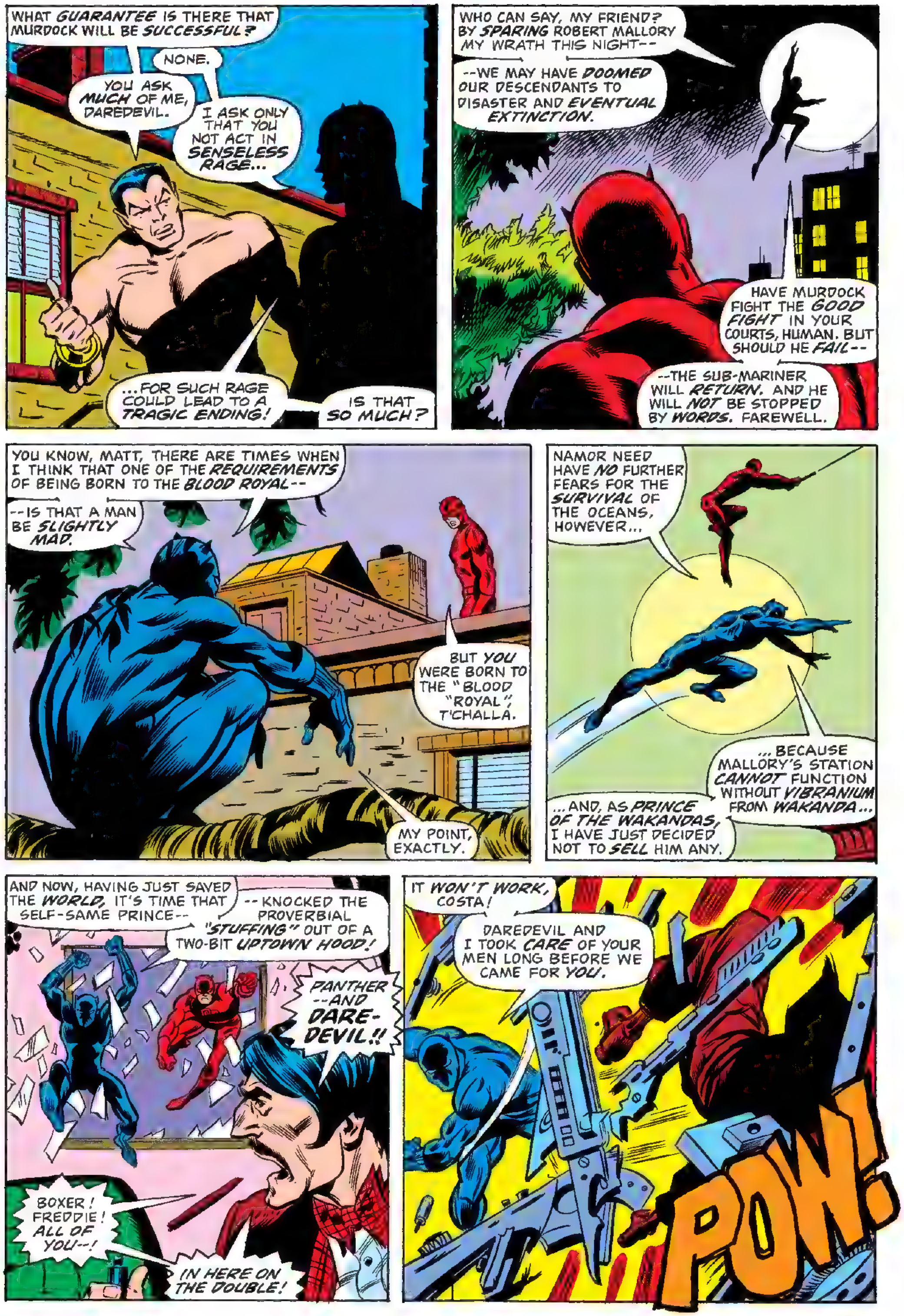
AND TRUE ENOUGH, A MOMENT OR TWO LATER...
I SAW A STORE ROOM WHEN COSTA BROUGHT US IN HERE--
--YOU OUGHT TO BE SAFE THERE UNTIL I GET BACK.
I HATE TO LEAVE THE BOY IN THIS DEN OF THIEVES, BUT I REALLY HAVE NO CHOICE...
COSTA HAS TOO MANY MEN--IF I TRIED TO BREAK OUT WITH KEITH SLOWING ME DOWN, I'D ONLY GET US BOTH KILLED.
INTERESTING. BARELY AN HOUR AGO, I WAS WISHING I HAD A CHANCE TO PUT COSTA BEHIND BARS...
SKATASH!
...AND NOW IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL GET THAT CHANCE.
THAT BREAKING WINDOW MADE A LOT OF NOISE--
--THOUGH IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, WHO WOULD NOTICE?
A LONE TREE--SUCH A CHANGE FROM WAKANDA...
...OR FROM MONICA LYNN'S HOME IN GEORGIA.
NEW YORK IS SO... ALIEN TO ALL THAT I KNOW AND LOVE...
...AND YET, SOMETHING ABOUT THIS CITY KEEPS DRAWING ME BACK...
ENOUGH MUSING.
IT SEEMS MY ESCAPE WAS NOTICED AFTER ALL.

NO MATTER-- IT IS TIME I WAS MOVING.
POOR MAN-- HE ACTS AS IF HIS GUN MAKES HIM LORD OF ALL HE SURVEYS...
WELL, MY FRIEND, IF YOU THINK THAT, YOU ARE WRONG! YOUR GUN IS NOTHING--
-- AS YOU YOURSELF ARE.
WHAM!
BE SILENT, PANTHER--THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR RHETORIC.
COSTA MENTIONED THAT HIS MEN WERE GOING FOR MY RANSOM IN A VAN...
...AND UNLESS MY EARS ARE DECEIVING ME--
--THAT SHOULD BE THEM NOW!
IT IS!
SO BEWARE, RUFFIO COSTA--FOR TONIGHT THE BLACK PANTHER HUNTS!
HE HUNTS YOU!
HEY, GIL, YOU HEAR SOMETHIN'?
I COULD'A SWORN I HEARD SOMETHIN' LAND ON THE ROOF.
YEAH? WITH ALL THE PILLS YOU POP, JUNIOR, I'M SURPRISED YOU CAN STILL HEAR AT ALL.
ME, I HEARD NOTHIN'.


MIDTOWN... 8:54 PM...
LOST HIM!
IT SEEMS I HAVE UNDERESTIMATED DAREDEVIL'S AGILITY.
HE WAS OUT OF MY SIGHT FOR ONLY A FEW SECONDS, BUT IN THOSE SECONDS, HE DISAPPEARED.
NO MATTER--I HEARD HIM MENTION HIS DESTINATION--
--WASHINGTON SQUARE. IT SHALL BE MINE AS WELL.
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
MADE IT!
BUT ONLY JUST...
IF T'CHALLA'S KIDNAPPERS ARE PROMPT, I'LL BARELY HAVE TIME TO GET SET BEFORE THEY ARRIVE.
WHA--THAT VAN!
MY RADAR SENSE TELLS ME IT'S THE RIGHT STYLE--AND IT'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME. IT COULD BE THE ONE...
...AND THAT'S MY CUE TO MAKE MY MOVE!
OKAY, GENTS, PARTY'S OVER!
CRIPES--IT'S DAREDEVIL!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?! YOU AIN'T NO BLIND SHYSTER!
NICE OF YOU TO NOTICE.
THOK!
YOU'RE CRAZY! IF YOU STOP US, THE PANTHER'S A DEAD MAN!
JUS' LIKE YOU'RE GONNA BE A DEAD MAN, HERO--
--FROM THIS RANGE, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN MISS!
BAK!
I'M IMPRESSED, PAL--
--BUT NOT SCARED. PUT UP OR SHUT UP!

YOU ARE CRAZY-- YOU AIN'T BULLET-PROOF--
HEY!!
BE SILENT, LITTLE MAN.
PANTHER!
BUT IT CAN'T BE! NOBODY COULD'A GOTTEN OUTTA MR. COSTA'S MACHINE! NOBODY!
BUT YA DONE IT, JUS' THE SAME--AN' I GET TA SNUFF TWO HEROES T'NIGHT, 'STEAD'A...
GNNGKH
KTAM!
AND HOW WILL YOU DO THAT, PRAY TELL...
...WHEN YOU ARE UNCONSCIOUS?
I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, PANTHER--FOR A WHILE THERE, YOU HAD ME WORRIED.
UNTIL I SPOTTED YOU ON THAT VAN, I WAS FIGURING ON HANDLING THIS CAPER ALONE.
BDOW!
YOU KNOW--PAYING THE RANSOM, FOLLOWING THESE CLOWNS BACK TO THEIR HIDEOUT, BUSTING YOU FREE--
--ALLEZ-OOP!!
A FITTING RECEPTACLE FOR THESE "GENTLEMEN."
THEY SHOULD BE OUT OF THE WAY HERE UNTIL THE POLICE COLLECT THEM.
BUT TELL ME, DAREDEVIL--HOW DID YOU PLAN TO FOLLOW THEM WITH-OUT BEING DETECTED?
I WOULDN'T BE FOLLOWING THEM--I'D BE FOLLOWING THE MONEY.
RADIO-ACTIVELY IMPREGNATED, MARKED BILLS--OF COURSE!
AND THESE COULD NO DOUBT BE EASILY TRACED BY YOUR RADAR SENSE. MOST INGENIOUS.
NOTHING TO IT, REALLY.
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
TWO THINGS, MY FRIEND... FIRST, WE RESCUE YOUNG KEITH MALLORY--
--AND THEN, WE PUT RUFFIO COSTA OUT OF BUSINESS. PERMANENTLY.

DAREDEVIL!
CHOOM!
SUBBY! RADAR SENSE SPOTTED HIM AT... LAST MOMENT!--COULDN'T EVEN ROLL WITH THE IMPACT...
...BUT IF THIS SLACK-BRAINED UNDER-SEA MONARCH THINKS I'M GONNA GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT--
--BOY, IS HE IN FOR A SURPRISE!
BY NEPTUNE'S TRIDENT! HOW COULD ANY SURFACE-MAN MOVE THIS QUICKLY?!
EXERCISE, SUBBY, CLEAN LIVING...
...AND GOOD OLD, ALL-AMERICAN THOUGHTS--
--SOME OF WHICH I WILL TRY TO IMPART INTO YOUR THICK, AMPHIBIOUS SKULL--
--WHETHER YOU WANT TO HEAR THEM OR NOT!
WROK!
WHATEVER HAPPENS, PANTHER, DON'T INTERFERE-- THIS IS BETWEEN NAMOR AND MYSELF.
WELL, SUBBY, WHAT'LL IT BE? WILL YOU LISTEN...OR WILL YOU CONTINUE YOUR INSANE RAMPAGE?
I WILL... LISTEN, HUMAN...
...FOR NOW.
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU.
I KNOW WHY YOU'RE IN NEW YORK, AND I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF-- THE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE MALLORY'S TIDAL ENERGY PROJECT CAN DO.
BUT THREATENING HIM ISN'T THE ANSWER.
NOW I HAVE A GOOD FRIEND, A LAWYER--MATTHEW MURDOCK-- WHO THINKS THERE'S ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO STOP MALLORY'S PROJECT IN THE ONLY PLACE IT REALLY MATTERS-- IN THE COURTS!
...TO STOP HIM BY USING THE LAW, NOT DESTROYING IT!

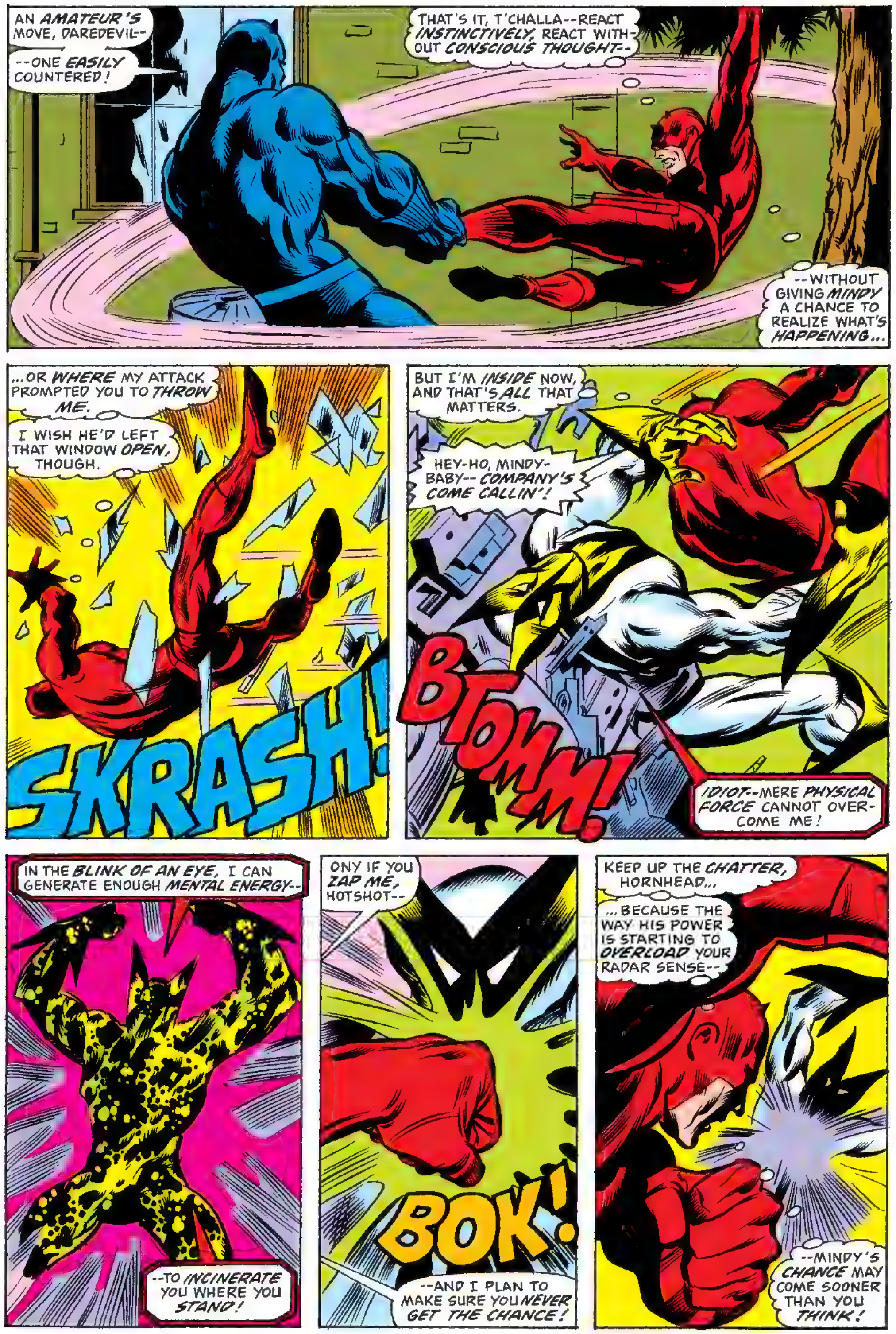


WHAT GUARANTEE IS THERE THAT MURDOCK WILL BE SUCCESSFUL?
NONE.
YOU ASK MUCH OF ME, DAREDEVIL.
I ASK ONLY THAT YOU NOT ACT IN SENSELESS RAGE...
...FOR SUCH RAGE COULD LEAD TO A TRAGIC ENDING!
IS THAT SO MUCH?
WHO CAN SAY, MY FRIEND? BY SPARING ROBERT MALLORY MY WRATH THIS NIGHT--
--WE MAY HAVE DOOMED OUR DESCENDANTS TO DISASTER AND EVENTUAL EXTINCTION.
HAVE MURDOCK FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT IN YOUR COURTS, HUMAN. BUT SHOULD HE FAIL--
--THE SUB-MARINER WILL RETURN. AND HE WILL NOT BE STOPPED BY WORDS. FAREWELL.
YOU KNOW, MATT, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I THINK THAT ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF BEING BORN TO THE BLOOD ROYAL--
--IS THAT A MAN BE SLIGHTLY MAD.
BUT YOU WERE BORN TO THE "BLOOD "ROYAL," T'CHALLA.
MY POINT, EXACTLY.
NAMOR NEED HAVE NO FURTHER FEARS FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE OCEANS, HOWEVER...
...BECAUSE MALLORY'S STATION CANNOT FUNCTION WITHOUT VIBRANIUM FROM WAKANDA...
...AND, AS PRINCE OF THE WAKANDAS, I HAVE JUST DECIDED NOT TO SELL HIM ANY.
AND NOW, HAVING JUST SAVED THE WORLD, IT'S TIME THAT SELF-SAME PRINCE--
--KNOCKED THE PROVERBIAL "STUFFING" OUT OF A TWO-BIT UPTOWN HOOD!
PANTHER --AND DARE-DEVIL!!
BOXER! FREDDIE! ALL OF YOU--!
IN HERE ON THE DOUBLE!
IT WON'T WORK, COSTA!
DAREDEVIL AND I TOOK CARE OF YOUR MEN LONG BEFORE WE CAME FOR YOU.
POW!

BROADWAY AND 101st ST... THE OLD BARRINGTON RESEARCH CENTER OF COLUMBINE UNIVESITY..., 9:31 PM...
...BUT THE LAB HAD BEEN SOLD BY THE UNIVERSITY IN THE LATE SIXTIES, WHEN STUDENTS PROTESTED THE WEAPONS RESEARCH IT WAS DOING FOR THE PENTAGON.
KROM
AN ODD PLACE FOR A FIGHT; AN EVEN ODDER ONE FOR A MAGGIA HEAD-QUARTERS...
THE MOB HAS OWNED IT EVER SINCE.
PANTHER, LOOK OUT!
THAT MACHINERY'S GOING TO EXPLODE!
THERE'S NO TIME TO REACT--ONLY TO STARE IN MUTE, UNCOMPREHENDING HORROR AS STREAMS OF RAW ENERGY EAT THRU COSTA'S SCREAMING FORM...
LORD IN HEAVEN, T'CHALLA--WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I DO NOT KNOW...
...BUT THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN GET TO HIM...
...NOTHING WE CAN DO.
HELP ME, PLEASE-- I BEG YOU--
"HELP ME!
IT'S OVER QUICKLY.
NEUTRON STREAMS INTERACTING, ATOMIC STRUCTURES BUILDING TO LOW-YIELD CRITICAL-ITY--SOONER OR LATER, SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE...
SZRAK!!
SHIELD YOUR EYES, PANTHER! QUICKLY, MAN!!
...BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU'D NORMALLY THINK.
MY GOD...
NOT DESTRUCTION... BUT, PARADOXICALLY...
...CREATION.
I--I... STILL LIVE!
AND YET, I FEEL... CHANGED...

SUCH...POWER FLOWS THRU ME, THE LIKE OF WHICH YOUR PUNY HUMAN MINDS CANNOT CONCEIVE...
MINDS, YES, THAT IS THE KEY...THE EXPLOSION HEIGHTENED THE POWER OF MY MIND TO AN INFINITE DEGREE.
NO MORE WILL I REMAIN THE HUMAN, RUFFIO COSTA...BUT NOW AND FOREVER MORE SHALL I BE...
MIND-MASTER!
AND WITH MY POWER, BLACK PANTHER, I COMMAND YOU TO KILL YOUR FRIEND!
KILL DAREDEVIL!
SKDOOM!
DAREDEVIL-- I CAN'T HELP MYSELF!
HIS POWER... IT'S CONTROLLING MY BODY...DANCING ME LIKE A PUPPET ON A STRING!
AND HE'S DOING A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF IT, TOO--
--THAT PUNCH NEARLY BUSTED MY JAW!
STILL, I SHOULD COUNT MY BLESSINGS...
...FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, MIND-MASTER CAN ONLY HANDLE ONE OF US AT A TIME.
I'M SORRY, PANTHER--
--I WISH I WAS DOING THIS TO ANYONE BUT YOU!
EVEN IF YOU DEFEAT YOUR FRIEND, DAREDEVIL, WHAT IS THERE TO STOP ME FROM THEN CONTROLLING YOU?
ABSOLUTE CONTROL, HERO--THE KIND THAT WILL TURN YOU--TURN ANYONE!--INTO MY WILLING SLAVE!
AFTER ALL, WHY SHOULD I BE CONTENT WITH CONTROLLING A MERE "SUPER-HERO" WHEN I CAN MASTER A MAYOR, A PRESIDENT-- WHEN MY POWER CAN EVENTUALLY MASTER A WORLD!

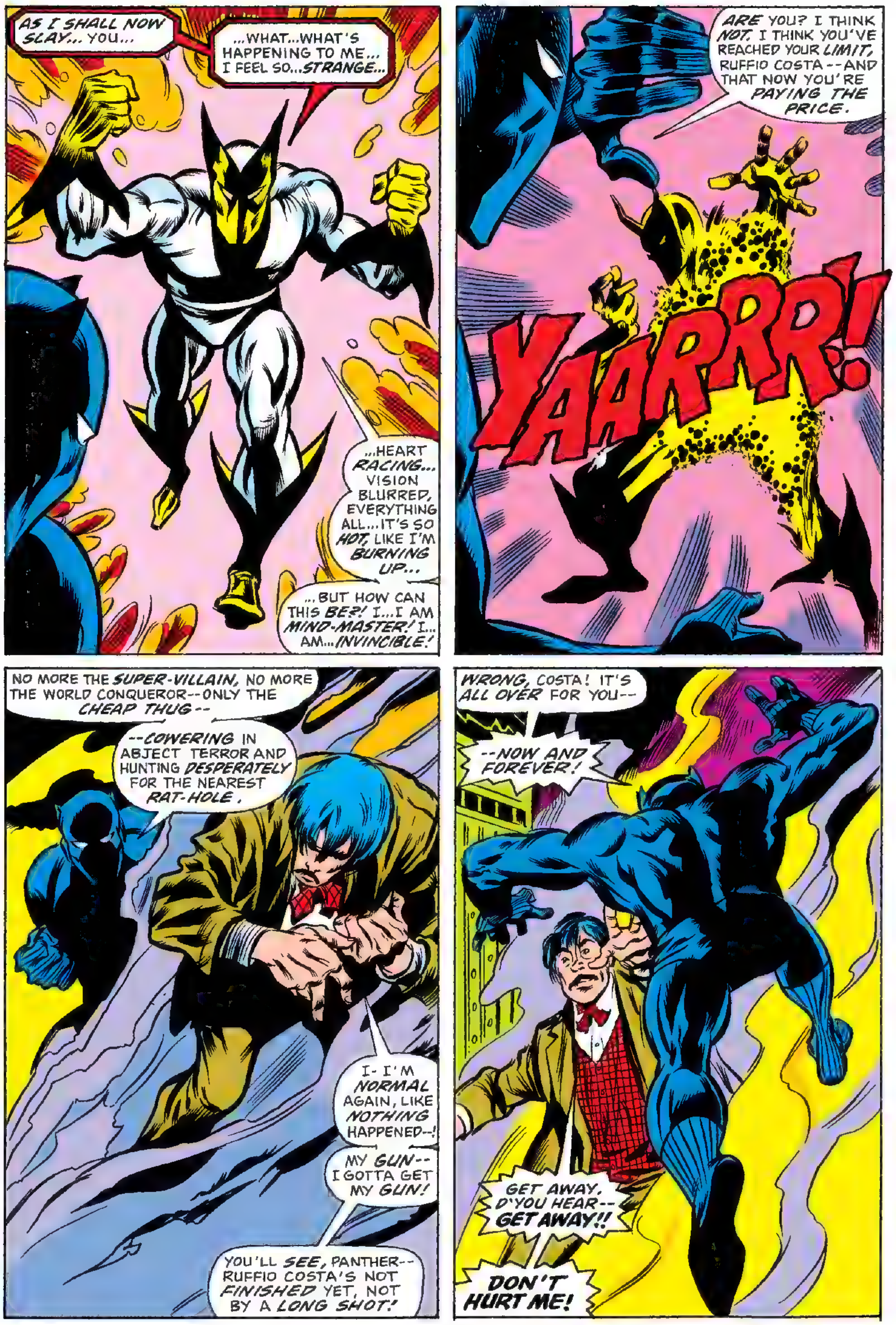
AS THE BATTLE SPILLS OUTSIDE...
BEAUTIFUL...COSTA'S REINCARNATION IS ALL HOT TO PLAY ATTILA THE HUN...
...AND I'M PULLING MY PUNCHES TO AVOID HURTING T'CHALLA.
WHAT'S THE PANTHER UP TO, ANYWAY?
I HADDA ASK.
PANTHER, FIGHT HIS CONTROL-- IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
I AM FIGHTING IT, MY FRIEND!
WHY DO YOU THINK YOU'RE STILL ALIVE?
I FIGURED IT WAS MY BRILLIANT, NATURAL SKILL...
OOOFF
CRETIN, YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME!
DAREDEVIL, MIND-MASTER'S POWER...IT'S OVERWHELMING ME... GETTING HARD TO... RESIST...
AIN'T THAT THE TRUTH.
THE HARDER I HIT THE PANTHER, THE EASIER I MAKE IT FOR MIND-MASTER TO TAKE HIM OVER BODY AND SOUL.
BUT IF I SLACK OFF, T'CHALLA MAY VERY WELL KILL ME.
IT'S LIKE WHEN I WAS FIGHTING NAMOR! RAW POWER ISN'T THE ANSWER.
MY ONLY HOPE IS TO OUT-THINK MINDY, TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE...
...AND THAT MEANS TAKING THE PANTHER BY SURPRISE, AS WELL.
HEADS UP, BUDDY! 'CAUSE AS OF RIGHT NOW--
-- IT'S NO MORE MR. NICE GUY!!
THE FOOL-- HE'S COMING STRAIGHT FOR ME!

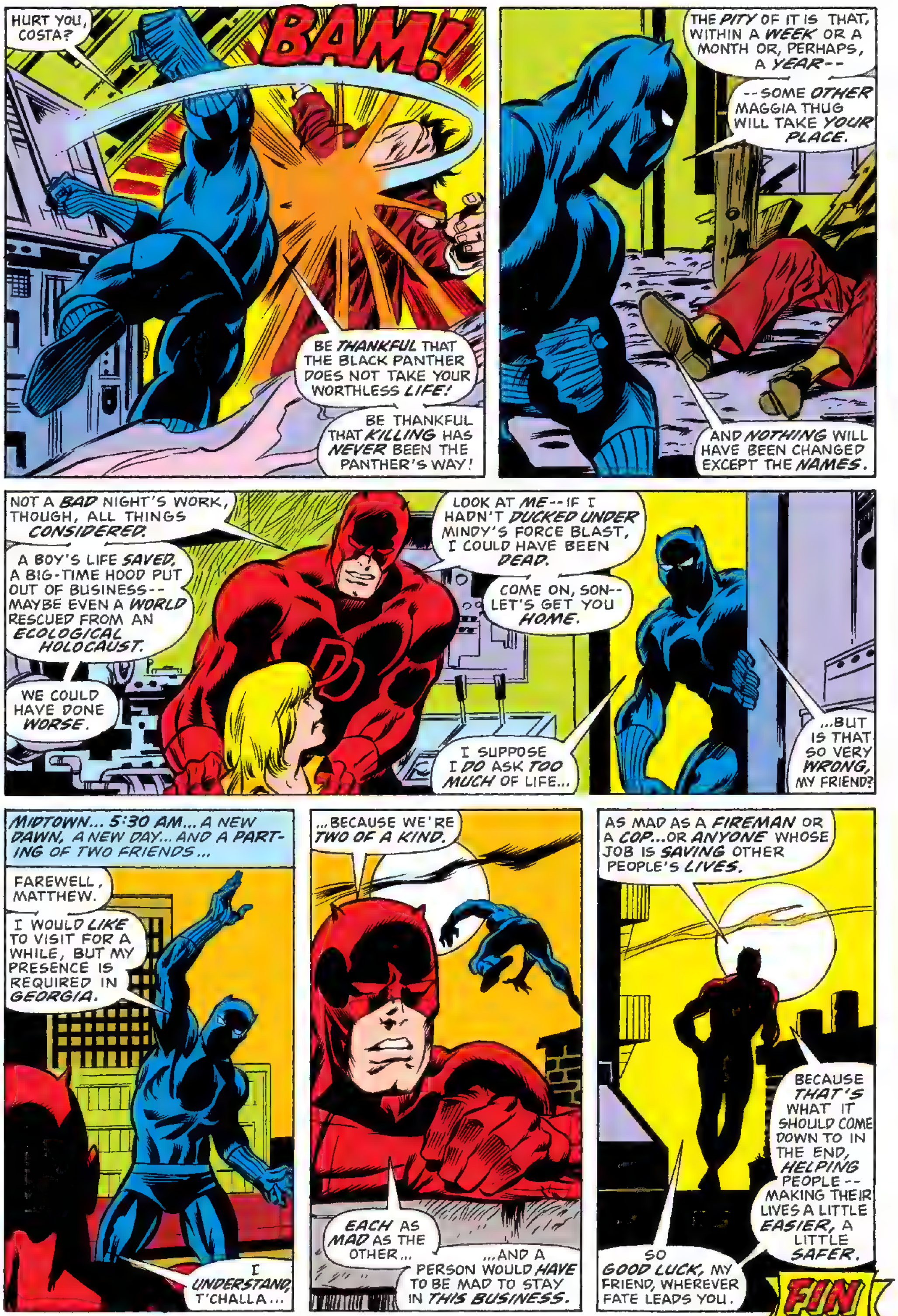


AN AMATEUR'S MOVE, DAREDEVIL--
--ONE EASILY COUNTERED!
THAT'S IT, T'CHALLA--REACT INSTINCTIVELY, REACT WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT--
--WITHOUT GIVING MINDY A CHANCE TO REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING...
...OR WHERE MY ATTACK PROMPTED YOU TO THROW ME.
I WISH HE'D LEFT THAT WINDOW OPEN, THOUGH.
SKRASH!
BUT I'M INSIDE NOW, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
HEY-HO, MINDY-BABY--COMPANY'S COME CALLIN'!
BTOMM!
IDIOT--MERE PHYSICAL FORCE CANNOT OVERCOME ME!
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, I CAN GENERATE ENOUGH MENTAL ENERGY--
--TO INCINERATE YOU WHERE YOU STAND!
ONY IF YOU ZAP ME, HOTSHOT--
BOK!
--AND I PLAN TO MAKE SURE YOU NEVER GET THE CHANCE!
KEEP UP THE CHATTER, HORNHEAD...
...BECAUSE THE WAY HIS POWER IS STARTING TO OVERLOAD YOUR RADAR SENSE--
--MINDY'S CHANCE MAY COME SOONER THAN YOU THINK!

GETTING HARDER TO DODGE HIS FIREBLASTS--HIS ENERGY PATTERNS ARE "WHITING" ALL MY SENSES OUT.
IF HE KEEPS THIS UP MUCH LONGER, I AM REALLY AND TRULY GOING TO BE BLIND.
AND A SITTING DUCK!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME FOREVER, DAREDEVIL...
...THESE ACROBATICS ARE ONLY PROLONGING THE INEVITABLE.
OH, NO! HIS BLASTS HAVE DISLODGED THAT GENERATOR!
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN GET OUT OF ITS WAY IN TIME!!
KBRAM!
PANTHER!
HAVE NO FEAR, MY FRIEND.
AFTER ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE FOR ME TONIGHT, I'LL NOT LET YOU DIE BY MIND-MASTER'S HAND.
THEN YOU'RE FREE OF HIS CONTROL?
YES.
WHEN YOU STRUCK HIM, IT SHATTERED HIS CONCENTRATION.
THEN, BY ALL MEANS--
--LET'S SHATTER HIS CONCENTRATION SOME MORE!
FOOK!
STRIKE ME AS OFTEN AS YOU WISH, COSTUMED CRETINS--
--AND EACH TIME I WILL RISE AGAIN--
--STRONGER THAN BEFORE!

MY POWER IS INEXHAUSTIBLE!
AAARRGH!
I CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED!
AND THOSE WHO TRY WILL ONLY MEET THE END THEY SO RICHLY DESERVE!
NO!
NO WAY, MINDY!
YOUR POWER'S SELF-CONTAINED, GENERATED SOLELY BY YOUR SOUPED-UP MIND!
AND I'M BETTING THAT MEANS YOU HAVE A LIMIT--
--AND THAT FIGHTING US HAS PUSHED YOU PRETTY CLOSE TO THAT LIMIT--
WHAM!
--AND THAT MORE FIGHTING WILL PUSH YOU PAST THAT LIMIT!
HOW ABOUT IT, MINDY?
CAN YOU FEEL THINGS BEGINNING TO COME APART INSIDE YOU?
BROW!
CAN YOU FEEL THAT POWER FLARING UP OUT OF CONTROL?!
NEVER!
ZKAT!
DAREDEVIL!!
BY THE GREAT WHITE APES, MIND-MASTER! IF YOU'VE--
BUT I HAVE, YOU SANCTIMONIOUS SIMPLETON--
--I HAVE SLAIN DAREDEVIL!!


AS I SHALL NOW SLAY... YOU...
...WHAT...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME... I FEEL SO...STRANGE...
...HEART RACING... VISION BLURRED, EVERYTHING ALL...IT'S SO HOT, LIKE I'M BURNING UP...
...BUT HOW CAN THIS BE?! I...I AM MIND-MASTER! I... AM...INVINCIBLE!
ARE YOU? I THINK NOT. I THINK YOU'VE REACHED YOUR LIMIT, RUFFIO COSTA--AND THAT NOW YOU'RE PAYING THE PRICE.
YAARRR!
NO MORE THE SUPER-VILLAIN, NO MORE THE WORLD CONQUEROR--ONLY THE CHEAP THUG--
--COWERING IN ABJECT TERROR AND HUNTING DESPERATELY FOR THE NEAREST RAT-HOLE.
I- I'M NORMAL AGAIN, LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED--!
MY GUN-- I GOTTA GET MY GUN!
YOU'LL SEE, PANTHER-- RUFFIO COSTA'S NOT FINISHED YET, NOT BY A LONG SHOT!
WRONG, COSTA! IT'S ALL OVER FOR YOU--
--NOW AND FOREVER!
GET AWAY, D'YOU HEAR-- GET AWAY!!
DON'T HURT ME!


HURT YOU, COSTA?
BAM!
BE THANKFUL THAT THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT TAKE YOUR WORTHLESS LIFE!
BE THANKFUL THAT KILLING HAS NEVER BEEN THE PANTHER'S WAY!
THE PITY OF IT IS THAT, WITHIN A WEEK OR A MONTH OR, PERHAPS, A YEAR--
--SOME OTHER MAGGIA THUG WILL TAKE YOUR PLACE.
AND NOTHING WILL HAVE BEEN CHANGED EXCEPT THE NAMES.
NOT A BAD NIGHT'S WORK, THOUGH, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
A BOY'S LIFE SAVED, A BIG-TIME HOOD PUT OUT OF BUSINESS--MAYBE EVEN A WORLD RESCUED FROM AN ECOLOGICAL HOLOCAUST.
WE COULD HAVE DONE WORSE.
LOOK AT ME--IF I HADN'T DUCKED UNDER MINDY'S FORCE BLAST, I COULD HAVE BEEN DEAD.
COME ON, SON--LET'S GET YOU HOME.
I SUPPOSE I DO ASK TOO MUCH OF LIFE...
...BUT IS THAT SO VERY WRONG, MY FRIEND?
MIDTOWN... 5:30 AM... A NEW DAWN, A NEW DAY... AND A PARTING OF TWO FRIENDS...
FAREWELL, MATTHEW.
I WOULD LIKE TO VISIT FOR A WHILE, BUT MY PRESENCE IS REQUIRED IN GEORGIA.
I UNDERSTAND, T'CHALLA...
...BECAUSE WE'RE TWO OF A KIND.
EACH AS MAD AS THE OTHER...
...AND A PERSON WOULD HAVE TO BE MAD TO STAY IN THIS BUSINESS.
AS MAD AS A FIREMAN OR A COP...OR ANYONE WHOSE JOB IS SAVING OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT IT SHOULD COME DOWN TO IN THE END, HELPING PEOPLE--MAKING THEIR LIVES A LITTLE EASIER, A LITTLE SAFER.
SO GOOD LUCK, MY FRIEND, WHEREVER FATE LEADS YOU.
FIN

AFTERWORD

BY DWAYNE McDUFFIE

Sometime during the summer of 1973, I was in my backyard pretending to be Dr. J., an endeavor requiring great imagination on my part, as I was too small even to palm a basketball, much less dunk one. My best friend, Alan Tumpkin, interrupted my pathetic fantasies of athletic glory with important news from the real world.

"The Hulk is gonna fight Thor. It's supposed to be out already."

If Alan said so, it must be true. He knew more about comic books than anybody in the whole neighborhood. Even though my interest in the subject was, at the time, a good deal less fanatical than Alan's, this was definitely worth checking out. Much of our rapidly-dwindling summer vacation had been spent in heated arguments over who would emerge victorious in such a contest. I was quite certain that the Incredible Hulk would have no problem beating up a little guy who dresses in a cape and wears feathers in his hat. Alan however favored Thor, citing the Asgardian's mighty Uru hammer and mystical control over the weather as the likely decisive factors. Maybe so, but then, Alan also preferred Joe Frazier to Muhammad Ali.

The definitive answer to our debate was suddenly at hand. Only one obstacle remained. Lindsey Drugs, the "good comic store," was over three miles from my house, and I was expressly forbidden from riding my bike in the street. Nevertheless, I concocted a clever story to cover my illicit tracks, "I'm going over to Alan's, okay?"

Mom went for it.

Alan and I hopped on our bikes and made the long ride. We ran into the drug store and scanned all three comic racks. The Hulk vs. Thor comic was nowhere to be found. Alan consoled himself with a bag of "Gold Rush" bubble gum, which was pretty cool, because the gum looked like little gold nuggets, and it came in a cloth sack you could use to keep marbles and stuff in after you ate all the gum. I had twenty cents burning a hole in my pocket and was determined to buy a comic book. As it turned out, I'm very glad I did.

The comic I settled on was *Jungle Action* #6. It featured a super hero I'd never heard of called the Black Panther, but then, I'd never heard of the Black Panther political party either. The questionable taste of a black character being the lead in a book called Jungle Action escaped me completely. What didn't escape me was the dignity of the characters inside. I was instantly and hopelessly hooked.

My first Black Panther comic. Way better than gum.

The Panther wasn't the first black character I'd seen in comics. Blacks had already appeared in crowd scenes and even occasionally as supporting characters (although he was new to me, the Panther himself first appeared in *The Fantastic Four*). Here was even one black character who starred in his own monthly comic, Marvel's *Luke Cage, Hero for Hire* had been running for over a year when I first discovered *Jungle Action*. But I never connected with Cage, the bastard child of 10,000 blaxploitation movies, a super strong "angry black man" who wore chains by choice, didn't seem particularly bright, and spoke in a bizarre version of street slang that didn't remotely resemble the speech of any black people I knew. Spider-Man made sense to me. Cage? What can I say? I just couldn't relate.

In those days, when black characters in comics weren't busy being angry, they appeared either as faithful sidekicks, or worse, as helpless victims who begged white super heroes to rescue them. "How come you never did nothing for the Black skins, Mr. Green Lantern?" *And this was actually considered progress.* The Black Panther was nobody's sidekick, and if there was any rescuing to do, he'd take care of it himself, thank you. Moreover, the Black Panther was the king of a mythical African country, where black people were visible in every position in society: soldier, doctor, philosopher, street sweeper, ambassador — suddenly everything was possible. Before my astonished eyes, in the space of fifteen pages, black people moved from invisible to inevitable.

I've spoken ad nauseam about the importance of multiculturalism in fiction, as in life. I've preached about the sense of validation a child feels when they see their image reflected heroically in mass media. That particular summer afternoon, reading about the dastardly (but nuanced) Erik Killmonger's villainous plot to usurp the Black Panther's rightful throne, was precisely when I first felt that sense of validation. I realized that these stories could be about me, that I could be a hero, too. Years later, writing in my own comic, I'd describe that wonderful feeling as "the sudden possibility of flight." The creation of Milestone Comics was, among many other things, an attempt to pass that feeling along. It was about gaining the high ground, about gaining a perspective that allows you to see the many possibilities open to you. That issue of *Jungle Action* single-handedly revealed to me that there were new heights to reach, new vistas to view. It also, not incidentally entertained the hell out of me.

Thank you, Don McGregor.

What I didn't know at the time was that terrific comic I bought (and as it turned out, paid for, my mother wasn't actually fooled by my "going over to Alan's" ruse. When I returned from the store, she put me on a "no comics" punishment for an agonizing two weeks) was only the beginning of an unprecedented multipart epic called "The Panther's Rage."

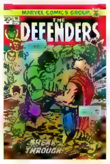
For thirteen bimonthly issues, over the course of nearly three years (yeah, I know. Let's just say that Marvel wasn't exactly a stickler for shipping dates, back in the seventies), aided and abetted by a number of exceptionally talented artists, including the late, great Billy Graham, "The Panther's Rage" was everything a super-hero comic should be. This overlooked and underrated classic is arguably the most tightly-written multi-part super-hero epic ever. You just read it, so you know I'm not exaggerating when I say that it's damn-near flawless. Every issue, every scene, is a functional, necessary part of the whole. Okay, now go back and read any individual issue. You'll find, in seamlessly integrated words and pictures, clearly introduced characters and situations, a concise (sometimes even transparent) recap, beautifully developed character relationships, at least one cool new villain, a stunning action set piece to test our hero's skills and resolve, and a story that is always moving forward toward a definite and satisfying conclusion. That's what we should all be delivering, every single month. Don and company did it in only a relative handful of story pages per issue. Compare this to the bloated, empty, ill planned "story arcs" you see in many of today's comics. Six 22-page issues to tell about two issue's worth of story seems to be about par. Ah, but now I'm just bitching.

I followed Don's work and became a hard-core fan, first of the Panther, then Marvel, and finally of the medium. Meanwhile, Don McGregor spent the next forty years continually challenging the limits of that medium by producing gems including *Killraven, Detectives, Inc., Sabre, Ragamuffins, Nathaniel Dusk, Zorro* and *Lady Rawhide*. Along the way, he returned to lend his magic to the Black Panther twice more, producing the classic stories "Panther's Quest," and "Panther's Prey." Perhaps we'll see them collected in a *Marvel Masterworks* soon?

Don McGregor is a writer who continues to this day to challenge and delight us, while validating our essential humanity. Like his work, he's a priceless treasure.

Dwayne McDuffie

2010



The Incredible Hulk vs. (or, as we used to say, "vizz") The Mighty Thor.

Dwayne McDuffie was the Humanitas Award winning creator of Static Shock, *a television writer and producer, and a co-founder of the multicultural comic book company,* Milestone Media. *In the fall of 1973, he and Alan finally got their hands on a copy of the Hulk vs. Thor comic. The fight was a lousy tie. He passed away in 2011.*

The Fantastic Four #52 unused cover original art (see page 578 for a color rendition of this cover)
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Scott Dunbier

This production photostat for *The Fantastic Four* #52's cover shows an earlier version of the Black Panther's costume without a full mask. See page 554 for an even earlier character design by Jack Kirby when the name being considered for the character was Coal Tiger.

The Fantastic Four #52 page 1 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Scott Dunbier

The Fantastic Four #53 page 1 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Scott Dunbier

Marvel's Greatest Comics #39 (November 1972) cover
by Jim Starlin & Joe Sinnott

Reprinting *The Fantastic Four* #52

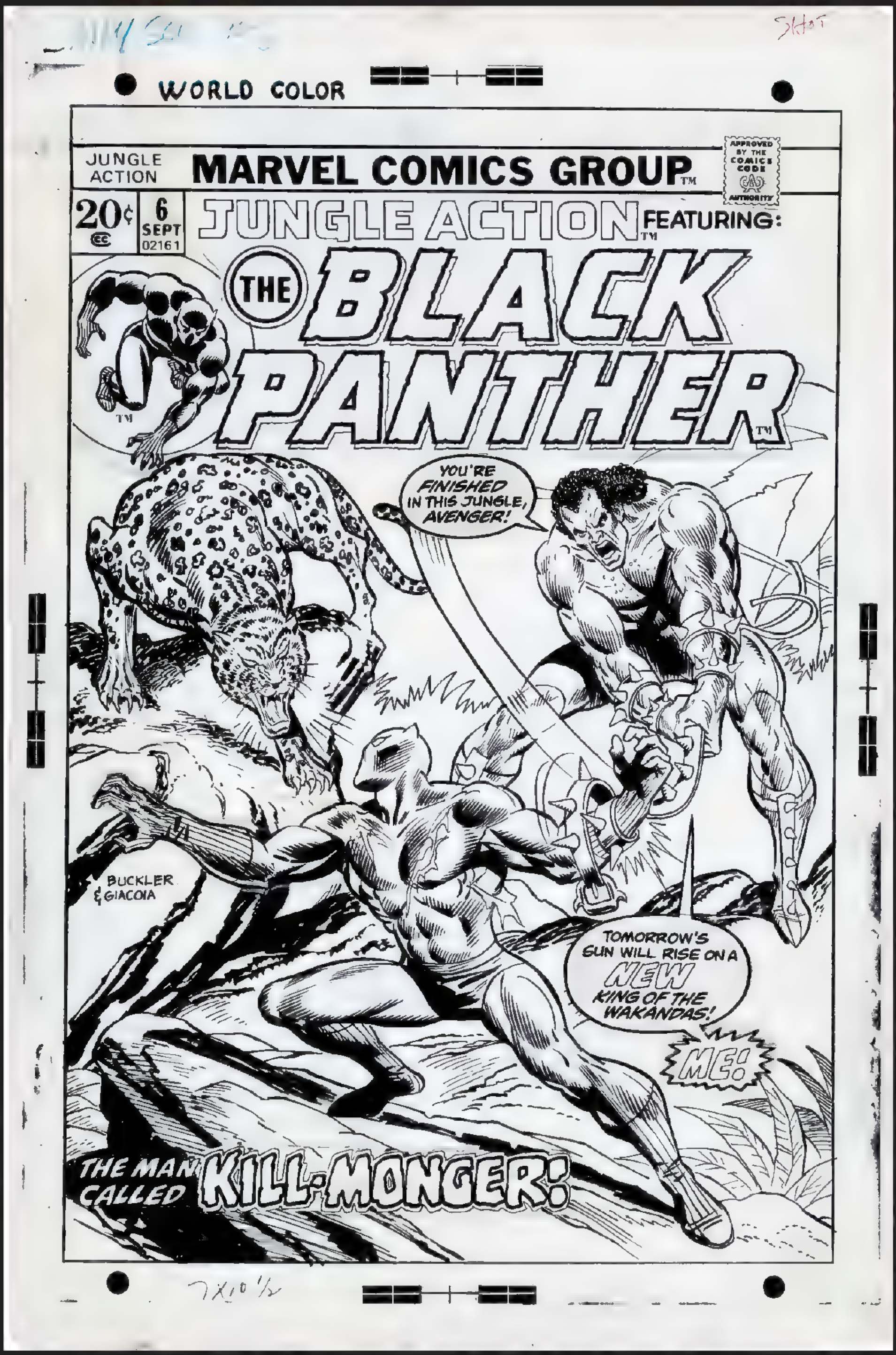
Marvel's Greatest Comics #40 (January 1973) cover
by Sal Buscema

Reprinting *The Fantastic Four* #53

Jungle Action #5 (July 1973) cover
by John Romita

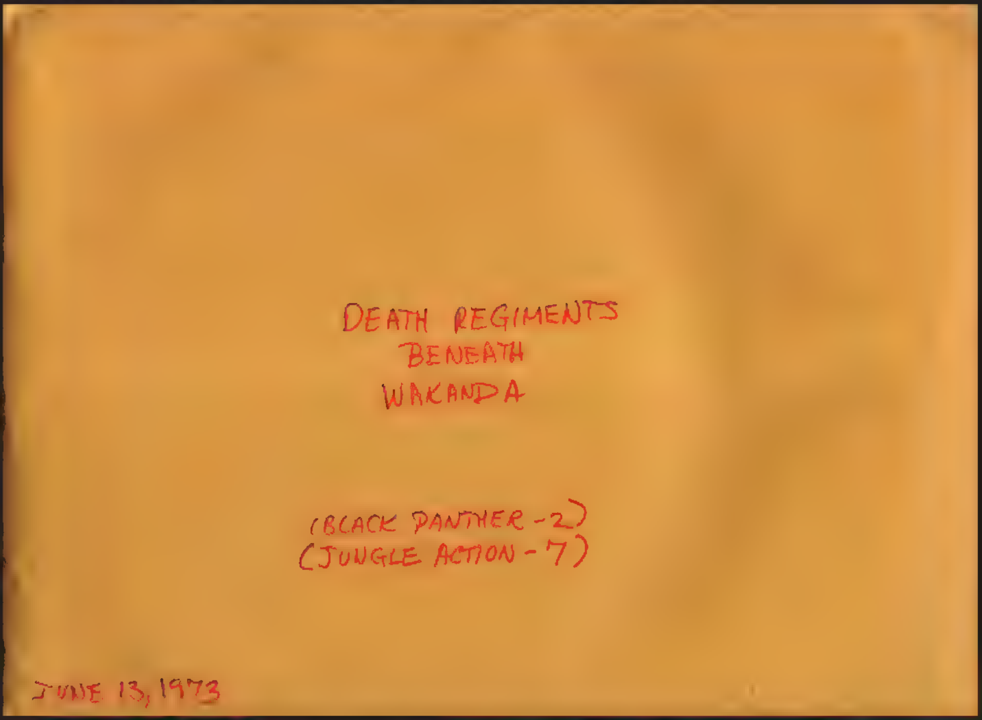
Reprinting *The Avengers* #62

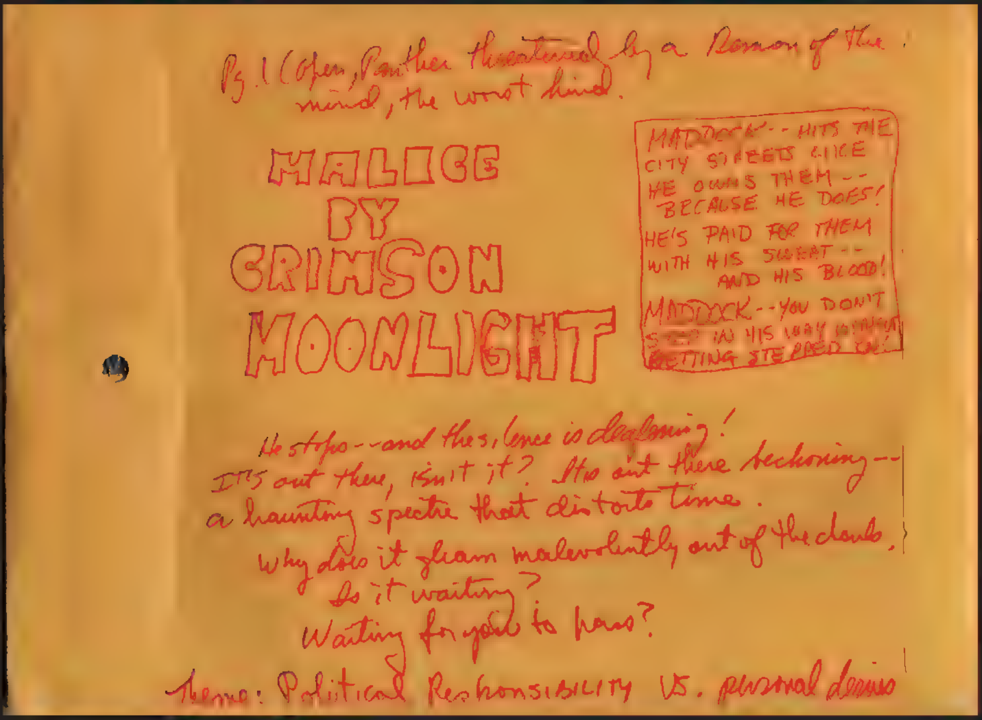
Jungle Action #6 cover original art
by Rich Buckler & Frank Giacoia



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Don McGregor stored his *Jungle Action* Black Panther plots, scripts and fan letters in dated envelopes. The reverse side of the envelopes often include his plot, character and layout concepts for subsequent issues, a rare peek into the creative process.





Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #7 "Death Regiments Beneath Wakanda" plot synopsis
by Don McGregor

DEATH REGIMENTS BENEATH WAKANDA

by Don McGregor
2121 Grand Concourse
APT 6H
Bronx, N.Y.

PAGE ONE: Three small panels run down the left hand side of the page, inside of which are either stats from specific panels from last issue's PANTHER'S RAGE, or small silhouette shots representing incidents from last issue. Copy narrates what has gone before. Atop those three panels, a circular shape, the Panther astride it, in which reads PANTHER'S RAGE CONCLUDES.

The huge burst panel shows Killmonger throwing the Panther over the falls.

PAGES TWO and THREE: Both pages combine in one effect, showing the brutal descent of the Panther from top to bottom of the falls. Panic rushes in at him along with the sweeping surge of water, but the Panther fights both the panic and his downward sweep. He kicks himself off jutting rocks, strategically holds his breath past the breaking point, takes the few collisions that he cannot avoid in places that will not break bones.

Killmonger leaves the scene when the Panther is out of sight and calls Kazibe and Tayete to follow him back to the settlement. Now that the Panther is out of the way, their plans can surge forward. Confusion will rein in Wakanda over their chieftain's death, and during that confusion Killmonger will strengthen his stronghold over Wakanda.

PAGE FOUR: Idyllic sight at the edge of the RIVER OF GRACE AND WISDOM. The river flows lightly here. WE open into scene with small panels which widen into major establishing panel. MONICA LYNNE stands upon the stone steps leading down into the inviting water. With her, is one of T'Challa's court hand-maidens, TANZIKA. Tanzika is a lovely young lady herself, dressed in flowing white robes. But the attitude between the two is reserved and only superficially congenial. Tanzika, as with most other Wakandas, are putout by the Panther's reappearance, bringing along this outsider, a commoner at that, to their realm.

Tanzika tells Monica she may bathe here. If she needs help later, Tanzika tells her she will be under the nearby pagoda. Monica slips off her robe and goes into the river. While she washes, she is unaware that a dark figure, OUR HERO, floats toward her, lying face down in the water. At the last moment, she sights him, pulls him from the water and onto the shore. WE do not know if he is alive or dead here.

Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #7 "Death Regiments Beneath Wakanda" plot synopsis (continued)
by Don McGregor

DEATH REGIMENTS BENEATH WAKANDA - SYNOPSIS Pg. 2.

PAGE FIVE: WE open on a pair of eyes, and reflected in those pupils are serpents heads. In the next panel, WE see a pair of hands moving almost hypnotically and there is a huge, terrifying reptile swaying before the hand.

KILLMONGER, TAYETE and KAZIBE walk onto the scene and WE see full figure for the first time, the impressive sight of HORATION VENOMM. Tayete and Kazibe react startledly to the sight of this man who already has one serpent wrapped about him.

WE are in a village area, and Venomm is inside a fenced off area where there are cages of reptiles. Small bowls contain potions inside these cages. AS WE watch the remaining serpent crawls toward the kneeling Venomm and wraps itself about the muscular, white figure. Kazibe shakes his head. "I haven't ever gotten used to that guy," he admits, to which Killmonger grins.

PAGE SIX: Venomm walks over to Killmonger. Killmonger tells him the Panther is dead. "We no longer move forward haltingly, Horatio! Our major obstacle turned out to be no obstacle at all. I promised you a place where you could carry on your reptillian practices, but also a place where you would be accepted. That place is here. The time is now!"

Killmonger tells Venomm to return to the minds. "If the Wakandians think the death of their leader is startling, wait till they see what else we've been up to. And while overseeing the minin operations, you might also make sure that the death regiments prepare for the coming battles."

Venomm agrees, leaves and Kazibe mutters about trusting this white man with the ugly face. Killmonger lays waste to Kazibe. "There was a time when I heard such talk daily, Kazibe...except the talk was about my flesh...You should beware, lest Horation ever hear your sentiments. He does not wear those serpents for...decoration!"

PAGE SEVEN: Back in Central Wakanda, just outside of TRANQUILITY TEMPLE. Huge flames leap up from ornately carved fireplaces. It is the scene of a feast, wild exotic dishes served to T'Challa, Monica, W'KABI, TAKU, and others. Sitting in the crowd is ZATAMA, ayouthful, rebellious figure who isn't much in accord with what the Panther is saying.

The Panther is dressed in ceremonial costume, complete with feathers and elaborate design. He has survived the falls, but bandages are wrapped about his chest. And now, as they feast, the Panther tells them about Killmonger and WE flip into flashback, those panels contained inside the flames that roast the delicacies cooking in huge, open tortoise shells. "I knew him as N'JADAKA--not Killmonger. And I met first, back in the lands across these waters--but his origins are here! He told me that during Klaw's first attack upon Wakanda, the raid that killed my father, T'Chaka (SEE F.F. #53), Klaw's men attacked the smaller village sites, looting and killing many of the populace, kidnapping some of the young men as slaves to be used in mining the valuable Vibranium ore. N'Jadaka was among those captured.

Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #7 "Death Regiments Beneath Wakanda" plot synopsis (continued)
by Don McGregor

PAGE EIGHT: The story continues, flashbacks scenes visually depicting the history lesson: "When I used Klaw's own weapon upon him, his men retreated, using those young men as hostages. N'Jadaka was among those, but soon after reaching American shores, he made good his escape."

"He was embittered even back then. Not having any idea how he could get back to Wakanda, or ever where it was located, he soon landed in an orphanage. His athletic ability, honed to an edge here, was exploited in his new home, and he managed a scholarship to a university. As black unrest and social upheaval dominated the AMERICAN scene and he joined a violent radical group. I learned mush of this after he contacted me. When the Black Panther came to America to fight alongside the Avengers, he immediately knew whom I was and desired to return to his homeland. When he chose the name Erik Killmonger, I cannot guess, nor do I know how he has become so powerful in so few years. But he must be made to pay for the suffering he has caused!"

Now WE are back into the present and ZATAMA accuses. "Your only answer to all of this is violence, T'Challa!" Before T'Challa can argue, Taku interrupts. "My Chieftain, a lone white man has been sighted near BLACK WARRIOR FALLS!" T'Challa reacts.

PAGE NINE: "And I have a strong idea whom he might be," he mutters and is off, once again, Monica calling to him. Sunset is falling as WE cut scenes.

WE open on Kazibe and Tayete, walking beside the falls. Something looms above them, hidden in the overhead jungle foliage. Tayete strides arrogantly. "I'll tell you one thing, Kazibe, that Panther ought to thank his Gods that it was Killmonger that finished him off...I would not have been so merciful." A hand comes down, grips Tayete by the throat and lifts him right off the ground until he is face to face with the Panther. "Perhaps, then, I'll not be merciful either." Kazibe, still on the ground, moans. "I don't believe it! I refuse to believe it!" "I've waited for some of Killmonger's crew to pass here. These falls seem to hold much fascination for your leader and his employs." "You'd best let us go,"Tayete says weakly. "The death regiments are only right behind us." "Death regiments?" The Panther muses. "Then perhaps they'll be more use than both of you." He flings Tayete down into Kazibe, knocking them both unconcious. Then he drags them into the foliage and secretes himself.

PAGE TEN: The death regiments, in full regalia, pass, unaware that the Panther lurks nearby. And he follows them as they disappear under the falls. Build for suspense. What is on the other side? The Panther enters.

Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #7 "Death Regiments Beneath Wakanda" plot synopsis (continued)
by Don McGregor

DEATH REGIMENTS BENEATH WAKANDA SYNOPSIS PAGE FOUR

PAGE ELEVEN: A few small panels open the page as WE lead downward in a dark narrow passageway that opens into the huge panel of--A MINING OPERATION, UNDER THE SACRED MOUND OF VIBRANIUM. Killmonger's men are hollowing out from within. An incredible sight of bluish luminosity and errie design. One small panel is insert at the bottom of the page as a double pronged whip end wraps about the Panther's face and neck.

PAGE TWELVE: Pulled off balance, the Panther still lands on his feet as Venomm reveals himself. One of the snakes hisses, throws it's deadly poison at the Panther, who deftly avoids it and pulls Venomm, off balance. The Panther kicks between these deadly serpents. One lunges for his face and the Panther yanks himself aside and off a great cliff edge. Darkness and sure death beckon beneath him. And grinning, Venomm strides over and steps on one of the Panther's hands.

PAGE THIRTEEN: Now, the Panther does the incredible. The one hand that still holds earth, he suddenly lets go. The only thing holding him aloft is the fact that Venomm's boot is holding him there. If Venomm lifts that foot, the Panther plunges to his death.

But before, Venomm can do so, the Panther uses that free hand to reach powerfully upward, grabbing Venomm by his leg. He yanks Venomm over his head and the snakes fly downward. The Panther, still holding onto Venomm, whose life, at this moment, is entirely in the Panther's hands, climbs onto the ledge.

PAGE FOURTEEN: The Panther yanks Venomm up and lays into him savagely. Finally, when Venomm lies at his feet, the Panther stands over him, victorious. Grimly, he pulls Venomm up to him. "You and your leader, Killmomger, have spread terrorism over this land that is as corrosive as your name. In your mere passing, you have destroyed many lives. Some destroy in subtle ways, but you have left a wake of destruction--and I shall follow that trail, I shall take on any of Killmonger's aides...until we both stand face to face once more...~~andxtherexisxonlyxhimxandxI~~ and that time....shall be the final battle...for one of us!"

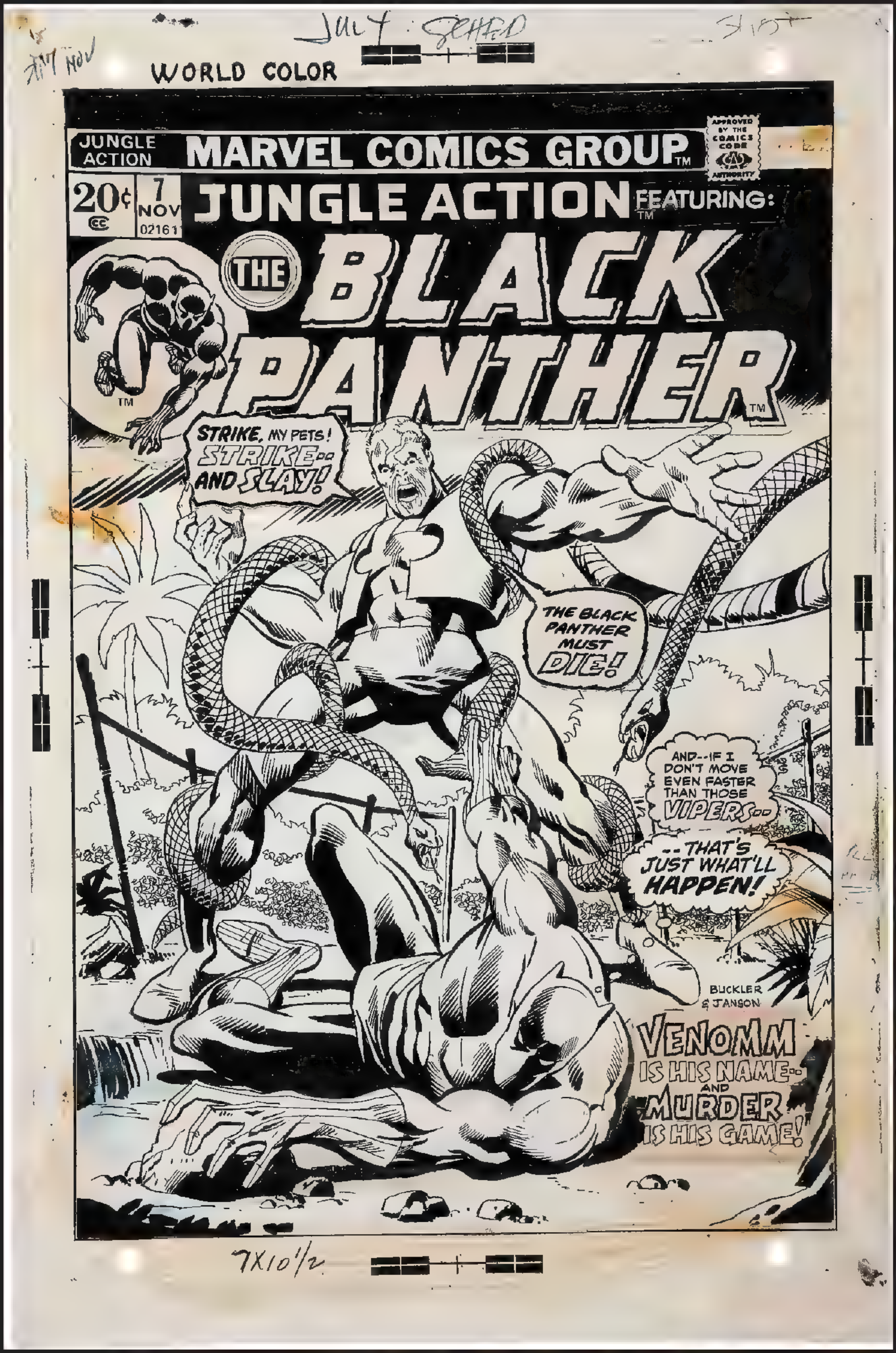
NEXT: AN EVIL MOST SUPERNATURAL
and
MALICE--she's too vicious for any fairy tale!

I have met many who dictum in artful manner—

Respect!
Speak not to me of respect.
To attain such one must first respect the human condition--
--and you and your leader have wantonly

Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #7 cover original art
by Rich Buckler & Klaus Janson



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #9 page 7 original art
by Gil Kane & Klaus Janson

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #9 page 15 original art
by Gil Kane & Klaus Janson

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #10 page 2 original art
by Billy Graham & Klaus Janson

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #10 page 4 pencil art
by Billy Graham

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The scope of "Panther's Rage" was not lost on Marvel's sharpest fans, a look at *Jungle Action*'s letters column reveals numerous future pros including Eclipse Comics publisher Dean Mullaney, writer Peter B. Gillis and Marvel editor Ralph Macchio. Macchio corresponded with Don McGregor in 1974 about a script he submitted for Marvel's black-and-white magazines and McGregor replied back with an autographed copy of *Jungle Action* #10. Two years later, Macchio was hired as a Marvel assistant editor and, over a 36-year tenure, went on to become one of the most successful editors in the company's history.

Hey Ralph,

Sorry to hear about the "Shopkeepers Beneath Cresskill, N.J." but since I feel that one of the Panther's most astute critics shouldn't be without the complete "Panther's Rage!" I hope you won't mind this complimentary issue. It's the least I can do for your support, kind words, and for taking the time to thoroughly analyse the books. I was hoping you'd make it down to the New York Comic Convention, Ralph, as it would have been a pleasure to meet with you and have a rap session. Perhaps next year or at another con.

Anyhow, as you managed to pick up the next issue, it only proves that "The Black Panther Was Dead But Is Still Living in..." you guessed it, "Cresskill, N.J."

Thanks again. Hope you enjoy the book.

Don

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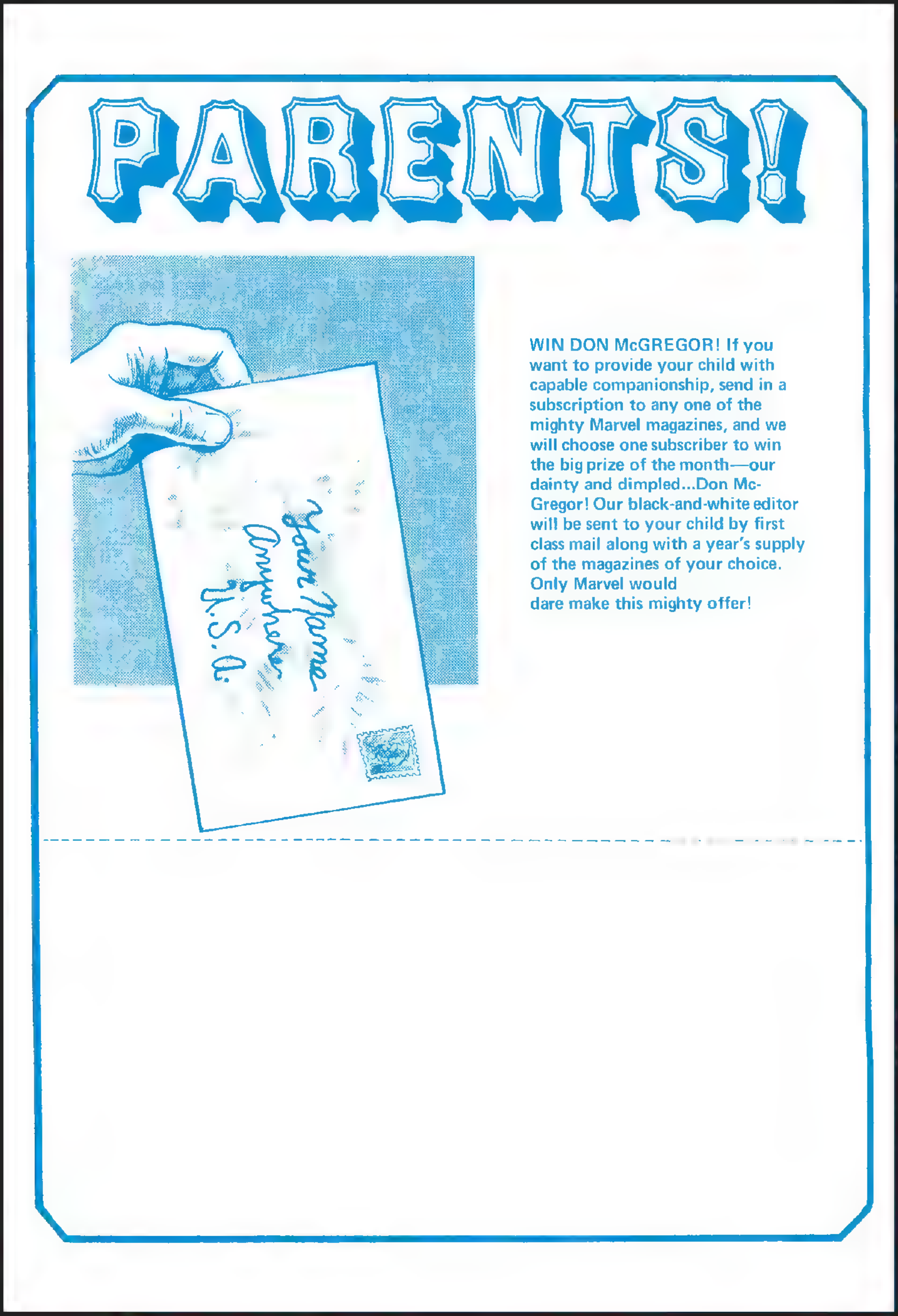
To Ralph! One of the Panther's most astute critics! Hang in there! Don McGregor '74

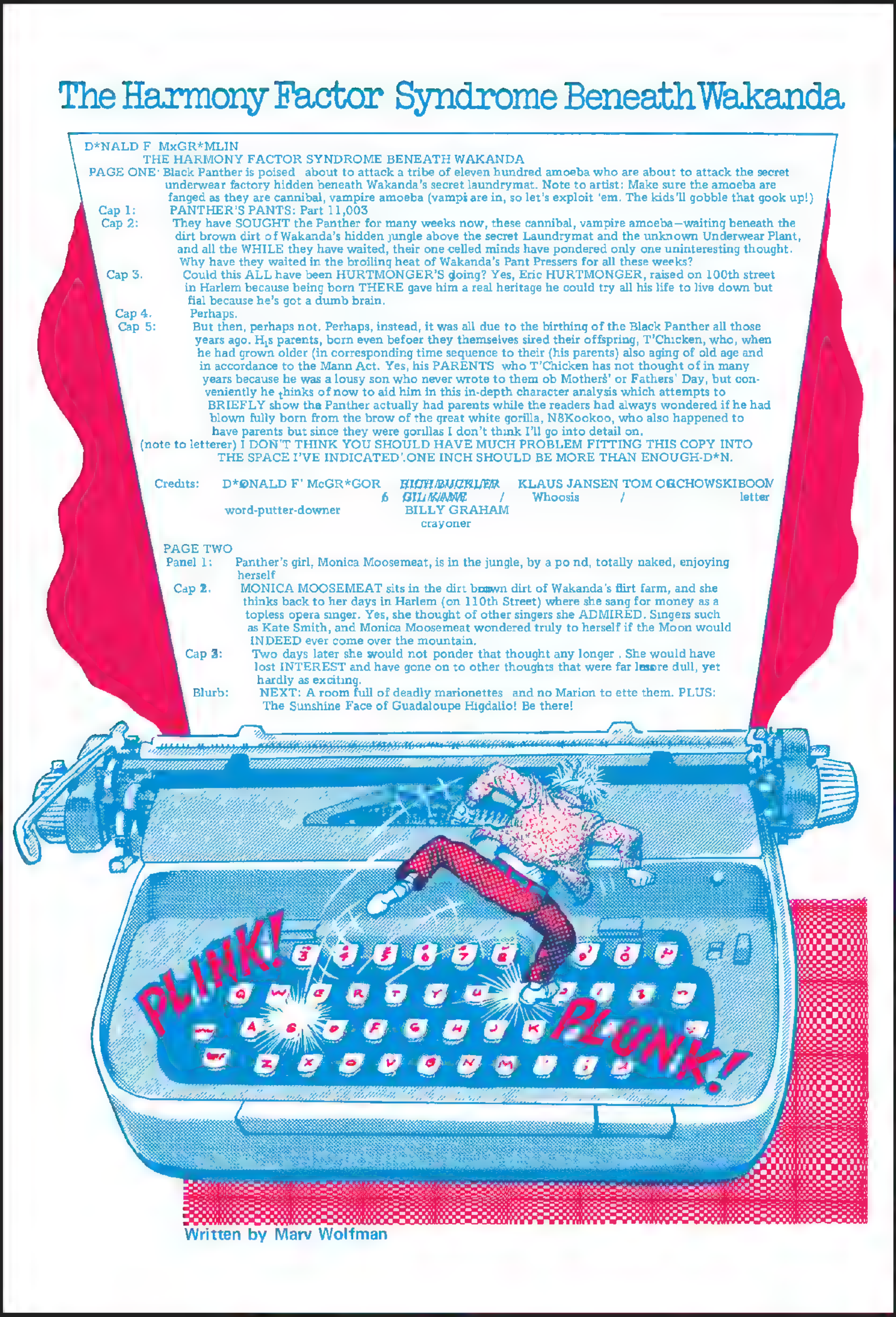
Courtesy Ralph Macchio

Jungle Action #12 page 9 pencil art
by Billy Graham

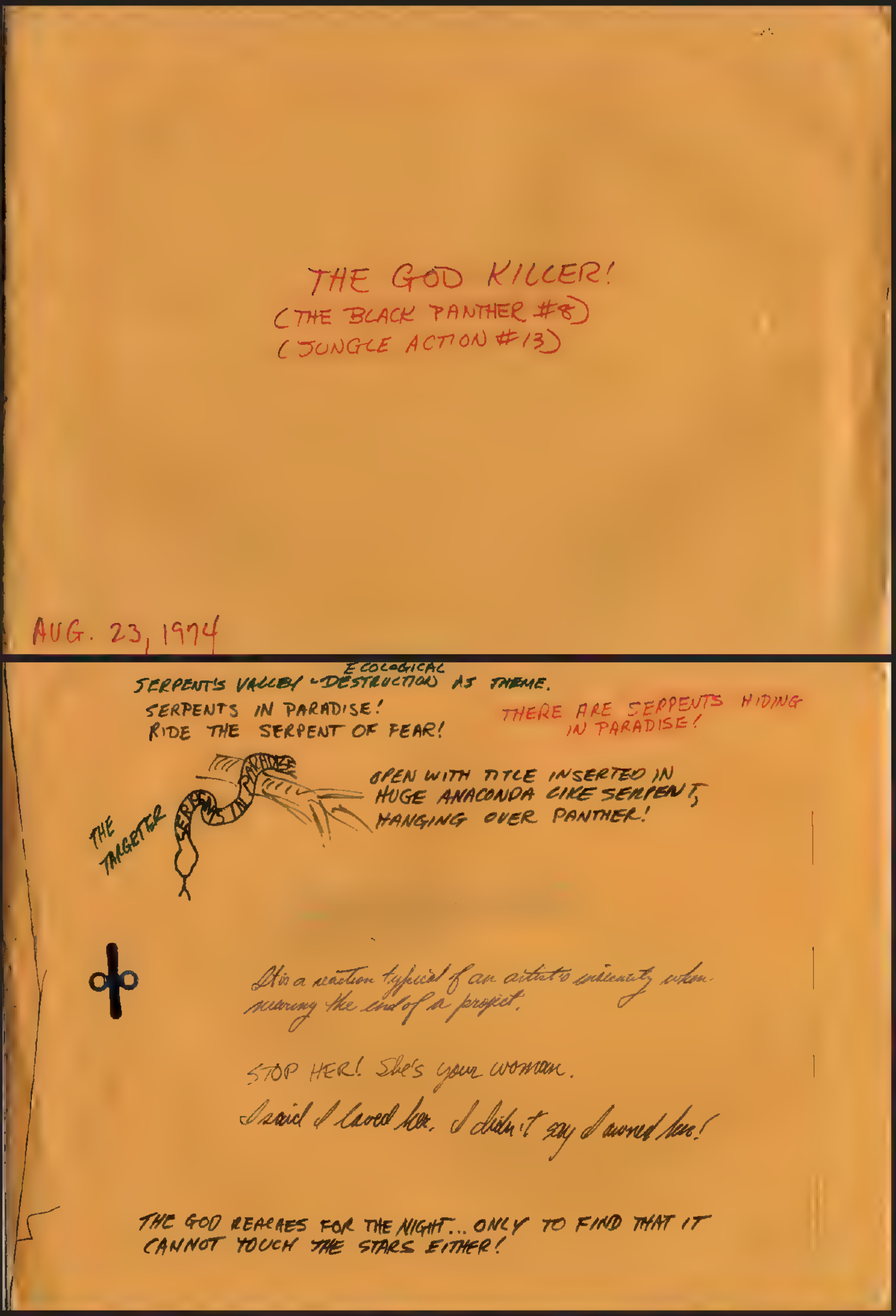
This house ad from *F.O.O.M.* #8 (December 1974) offers up Don McGregor himself as a prize to one lucky subscriber. He doesn't bite. Promise!



Marv Wolfman lampoons Don McGregor and "Panther's Rage" in this page from *F.O.O.M. #9* (March 1975).

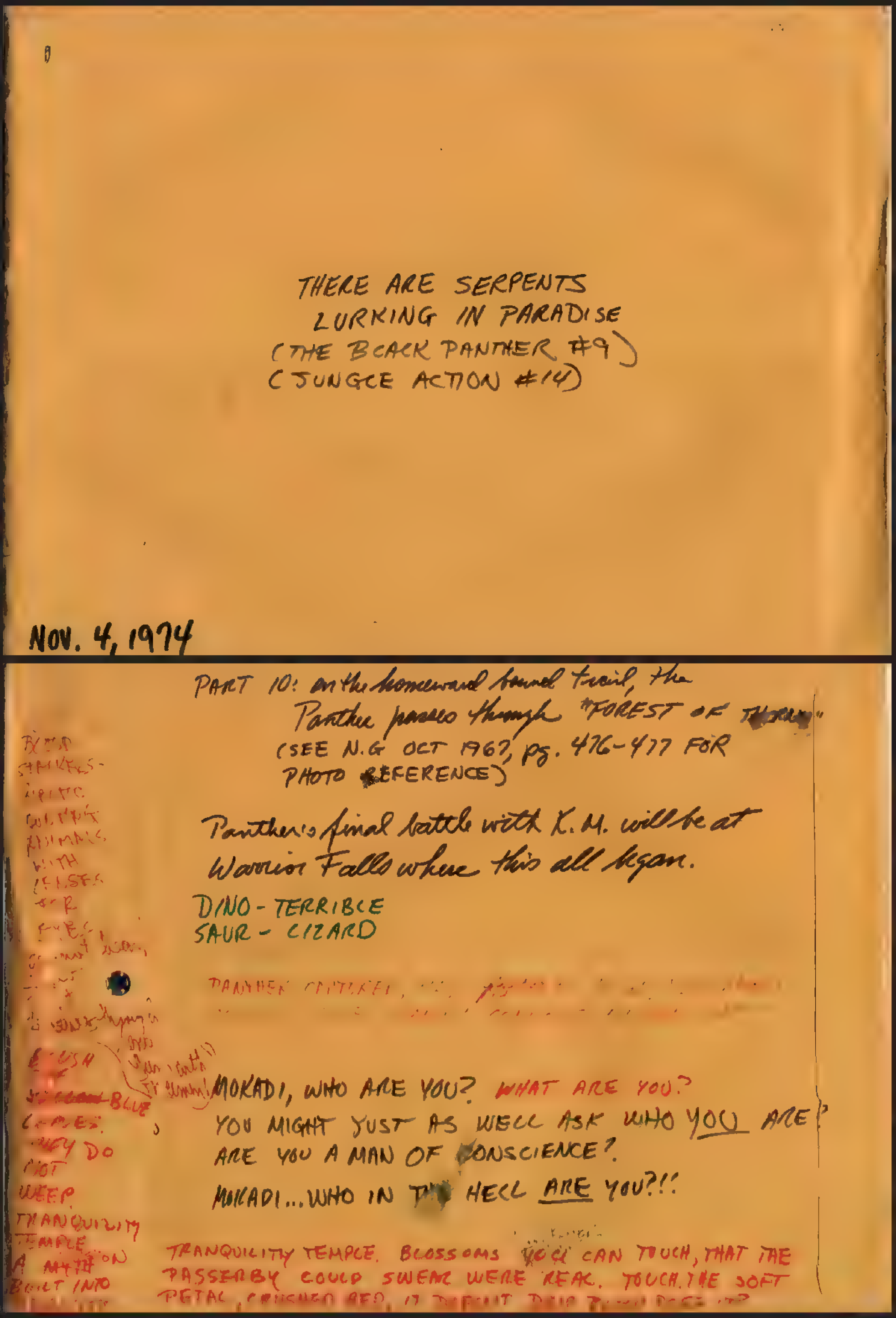


Don McGregor's *Jungle Action* #13 envelope, dated August 23, 1974, including notes for issue #14 and its title treatment.



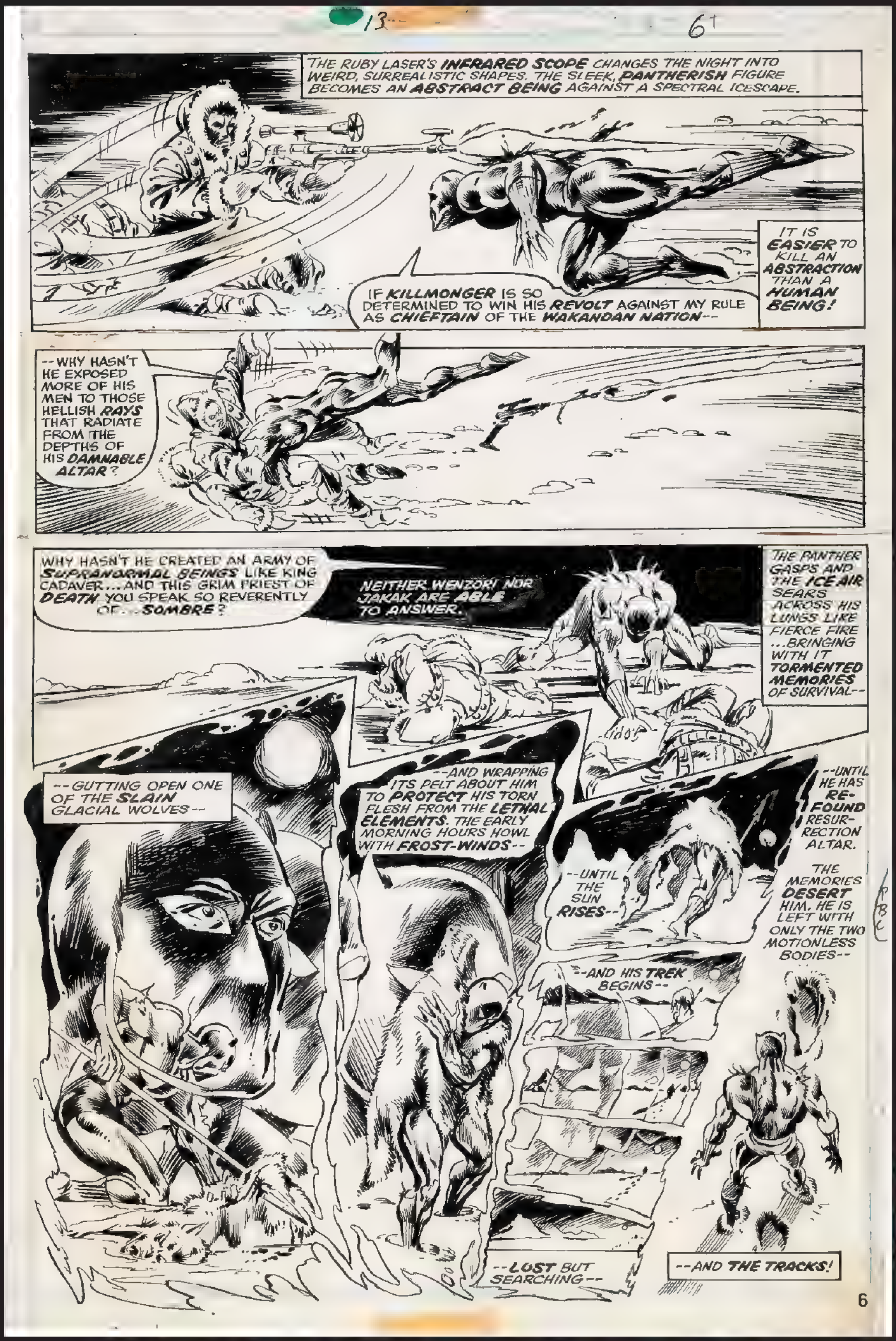
Courtesy Don McGregor

Don McGregor's *Jungle Action* #14 envelope, dated November 4, 1974, including notes on the conclusion of "Panther's Rage."



Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #13 page 4 original art
by Billy Graham & P. Craig Russell

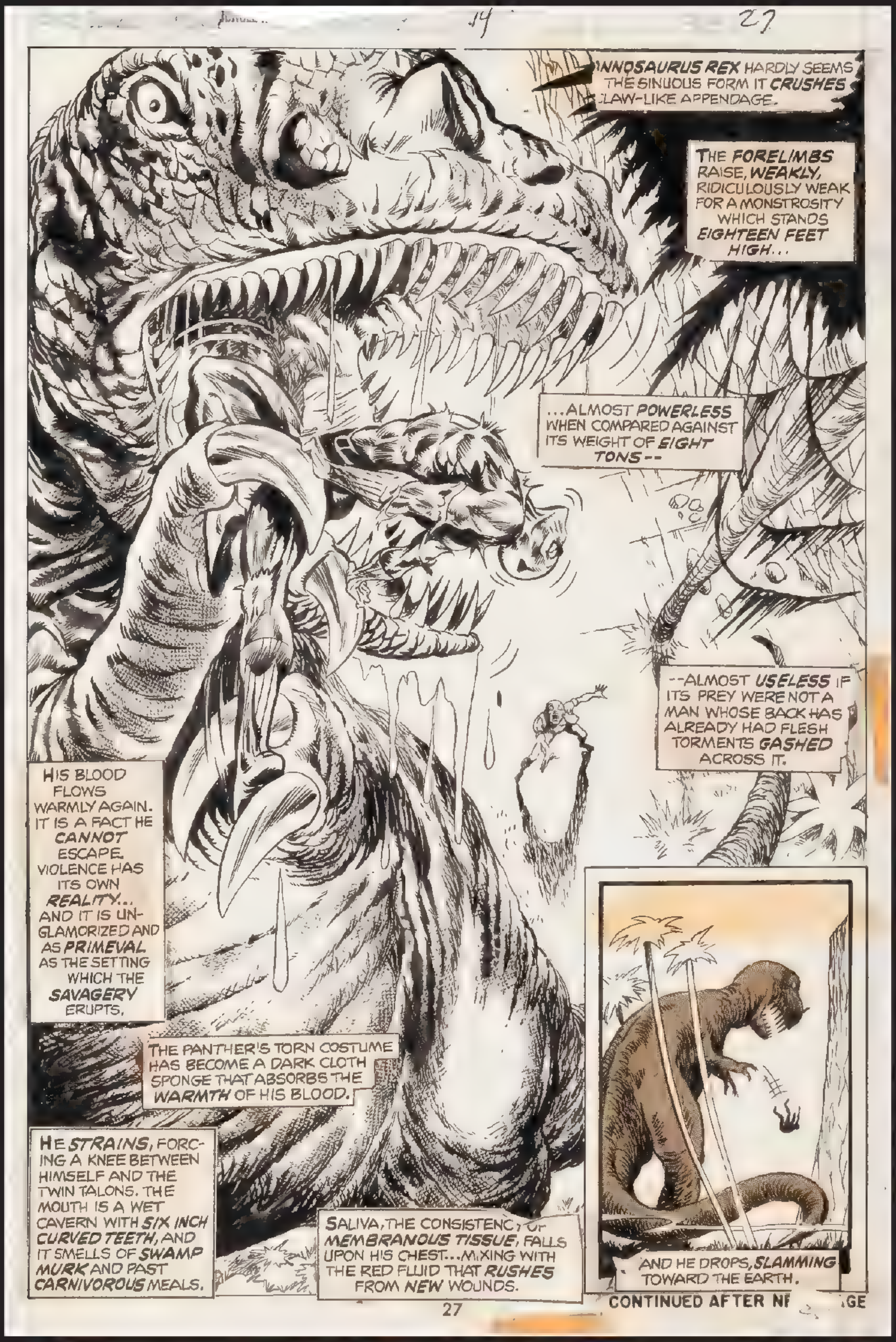


Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #13 page 8 original art
by Billy Graham & P. Craig Russell

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #14 page 15 original art
by Billy Graham & Pablo Marcos

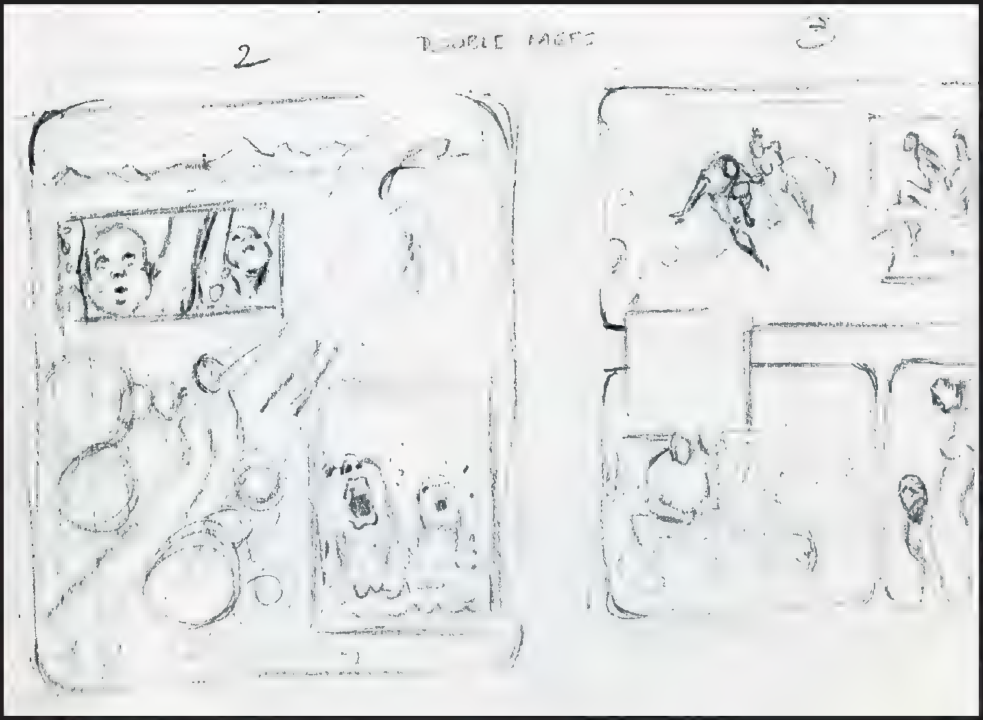


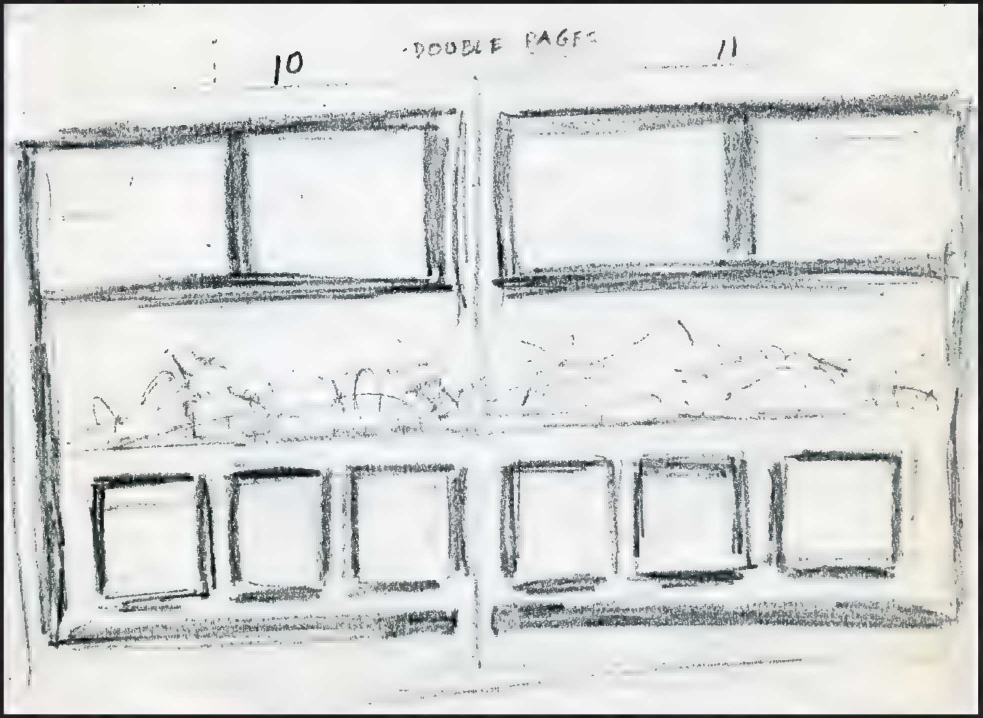
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Jungle Action #14 page 17 original art
by Billy Graham & Pablo Marcos

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

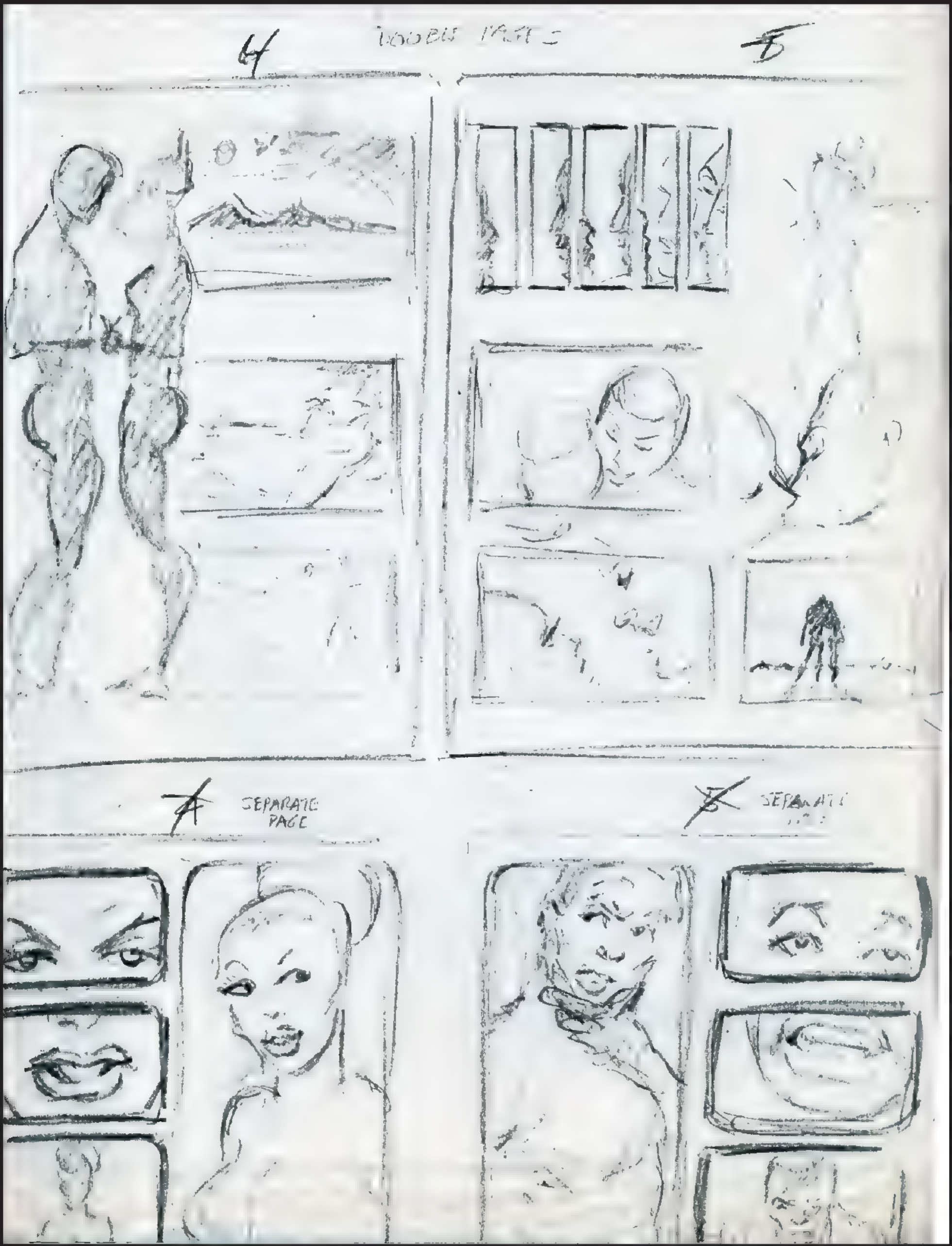
TOP: *Jungle Action* #16 pages 2-3 pencil thumbnail by Billy Graham
BOTTOM: *Jungle Action* #17 pages 10-11 pencil thumbnail by Billy Graham





Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #16 pages 4-5 pencil thumbnail; note the alternate layout concept at the bottom by Billy Graham



Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #16 cover sketch
by Gil Kane

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

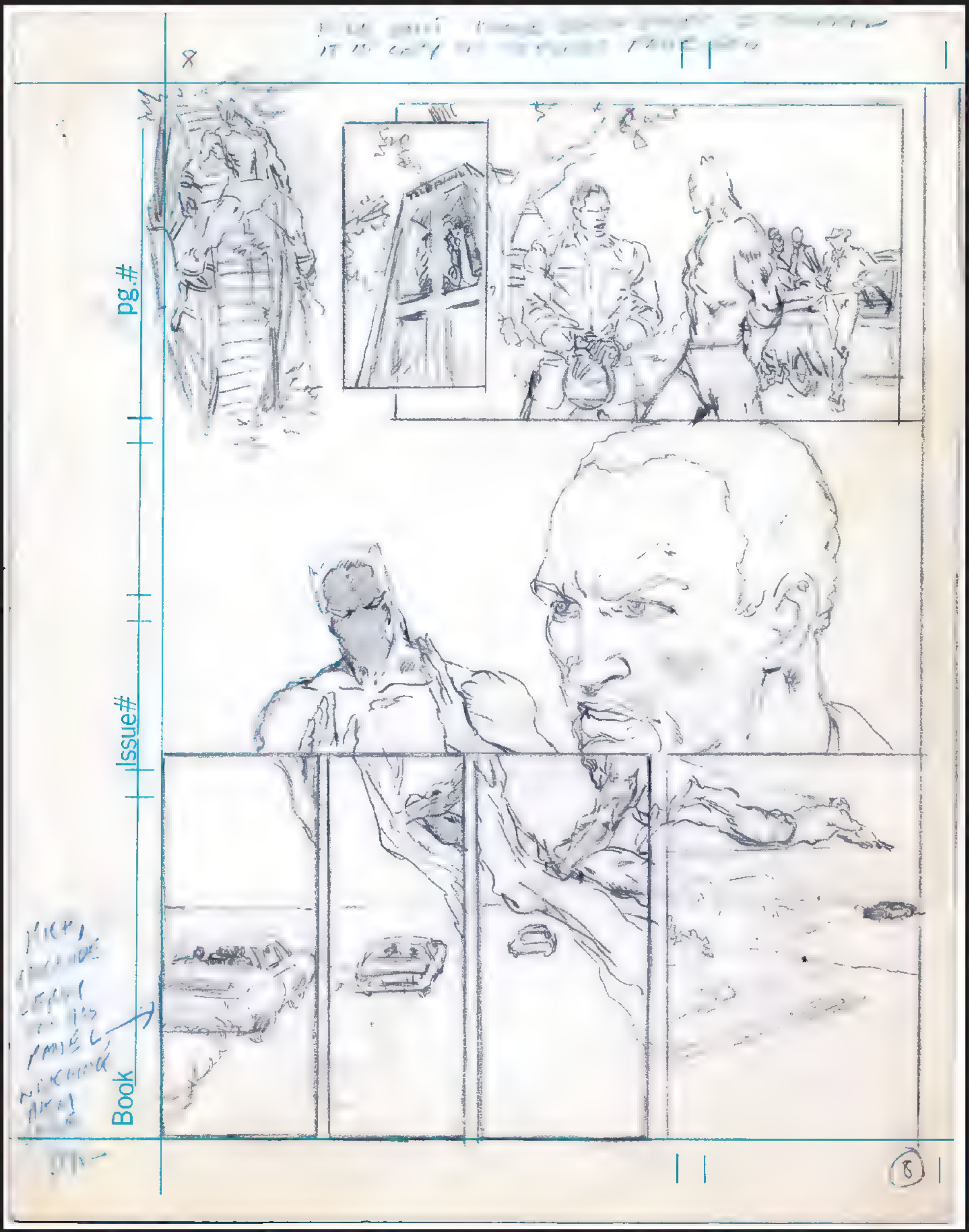
Jungle Action #17 page 1 original art
by Billy Graham

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Don McGregor's *Jungle Action* #18 envelope, dated May 15, 1975, featuring plot and dialogue notes for upcoming issues.

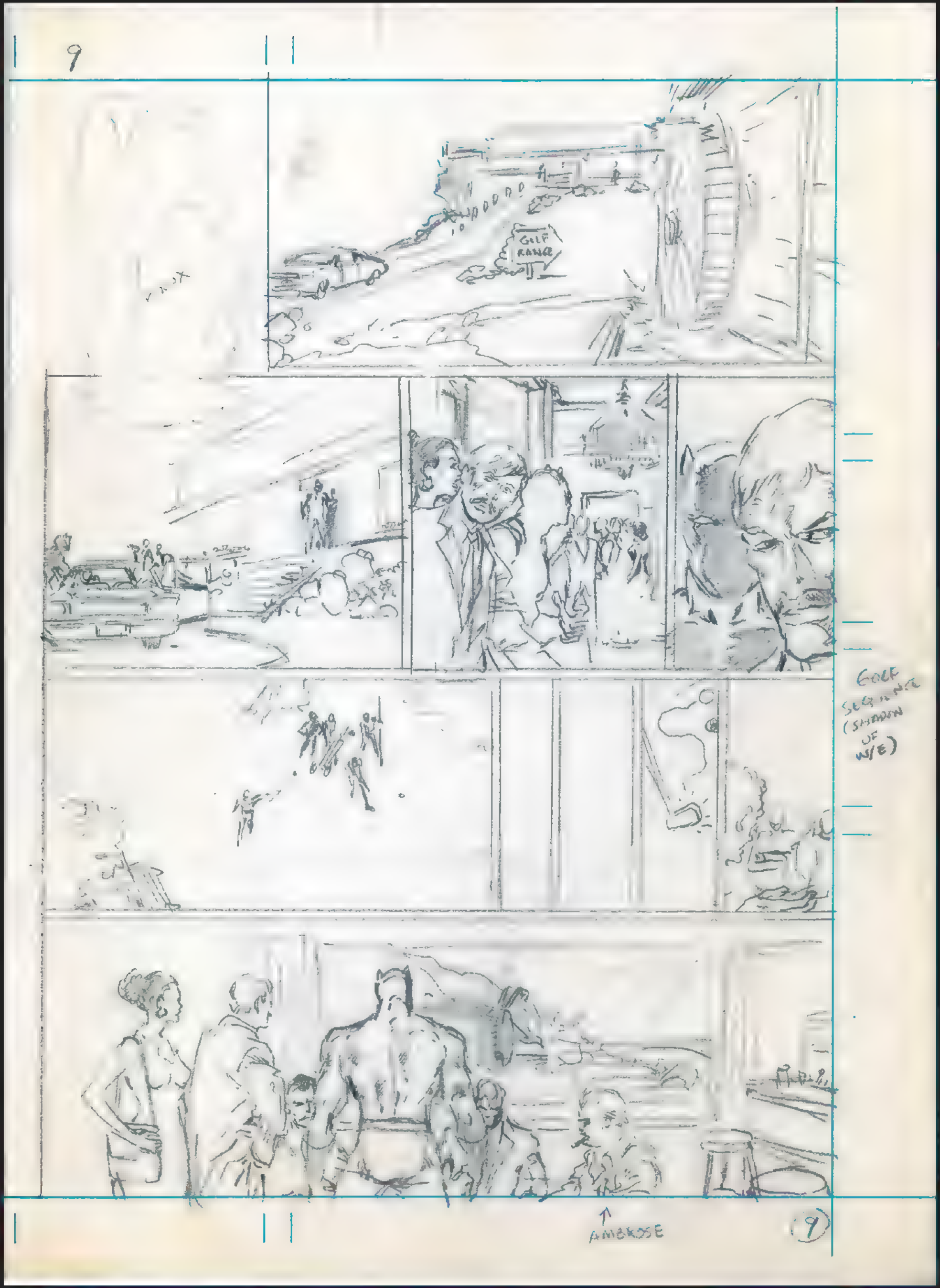
Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #24 page 8 pencil layout
by Rich Buckler



Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #24 page 9 pencil layout
by Rich Buckler



Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #24 page 10 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler

Courtesy Don McGregor

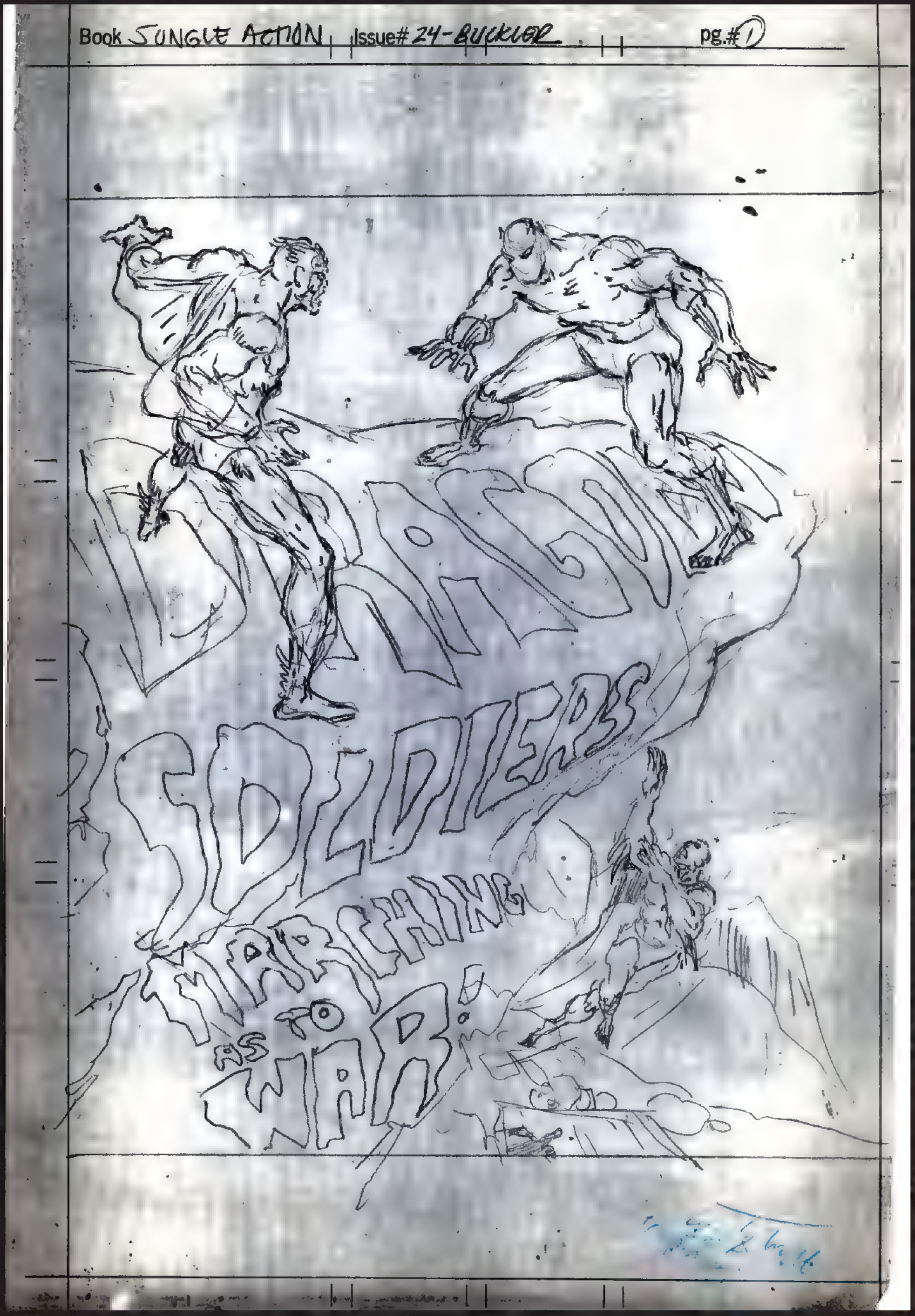
Jungle Action #24 pages 11-12 pencil layout
by Rich Buckler

Courtesy Don McGregor

Jungle Action #24 page 13 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler

Courtesy Don McGregor

Don McGregor's tenure writing Black Panther was stopped short when *Jungle Action* was canceled after issue #24 to make way for a new, self-titled series to be written by Jack Kirby. McGregor and Buckler had already begun work on what would have been *Jungle Action* #25, "Dragon Soldiers Marching as to War!" Page 1 layout photocopy, by Rich Buckler.

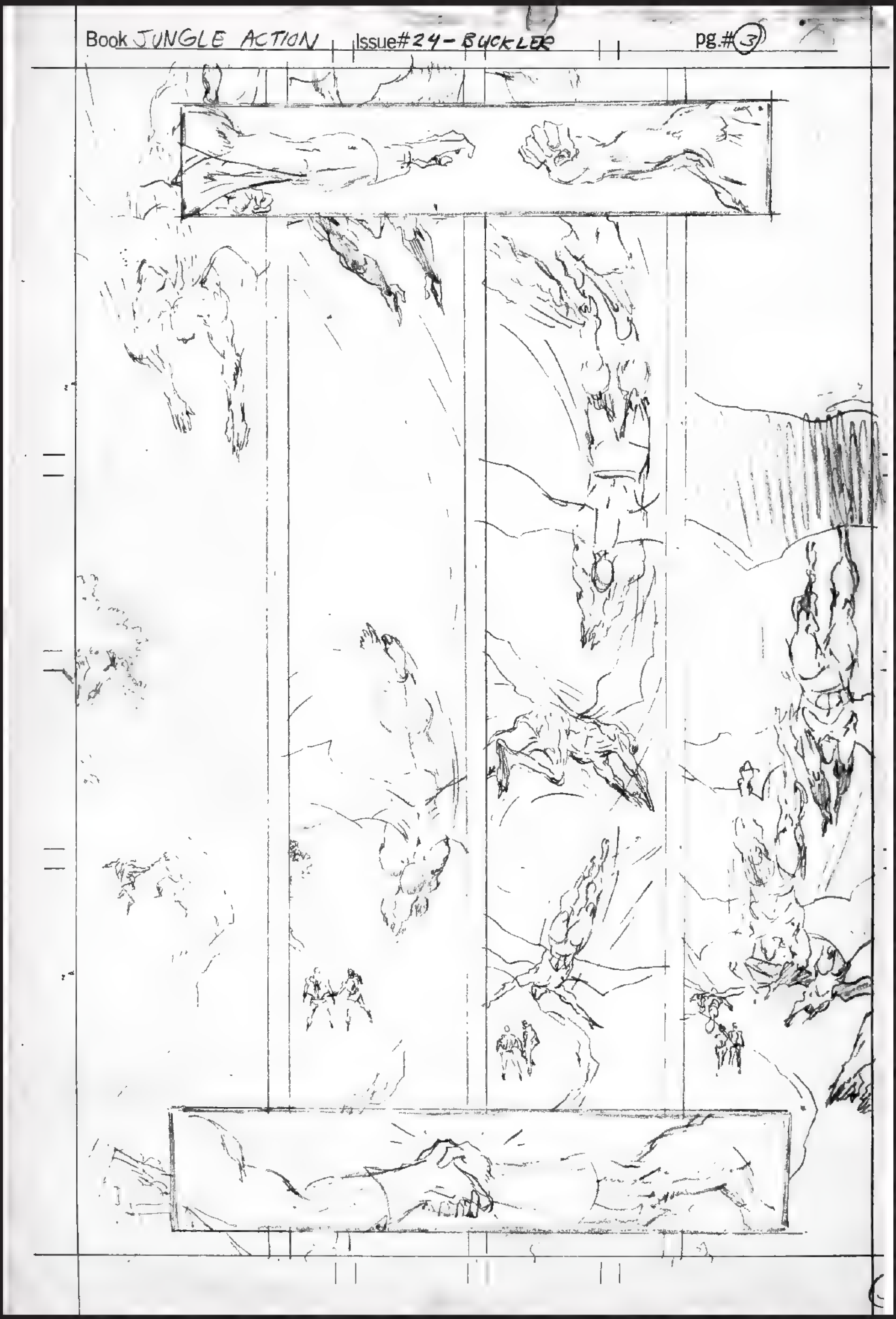


Courtesy Don McGregor

"Dragon Soldiers Marching as to War!" page 2 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler

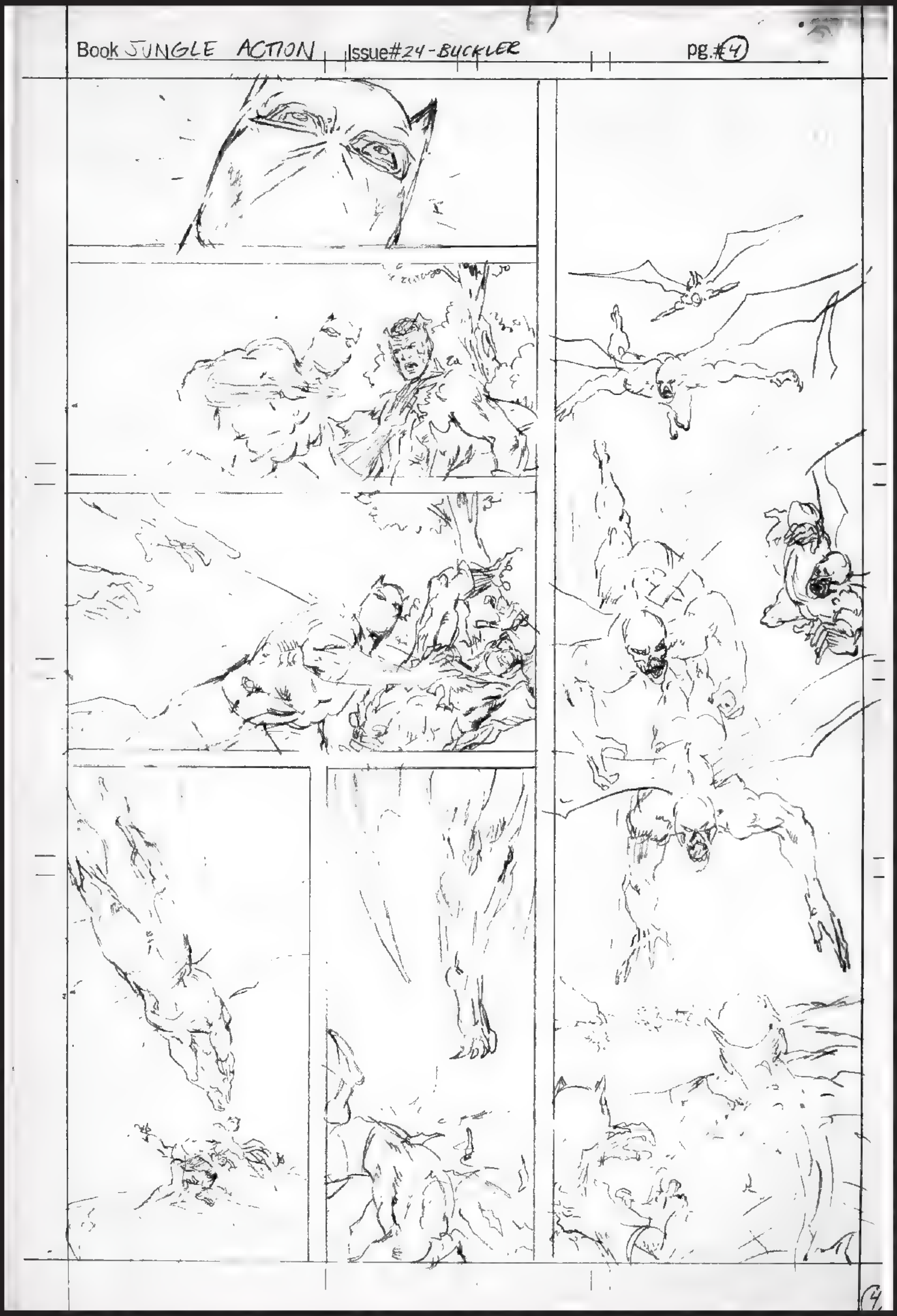
Courtesy Don McGregor

"Dragon Soldiers Marching as to War!" page 3 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler



Courtesy Don McGregor

"Dragon Soldiers Marching as to War!" page 4 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler



Courtesy Don McGregor

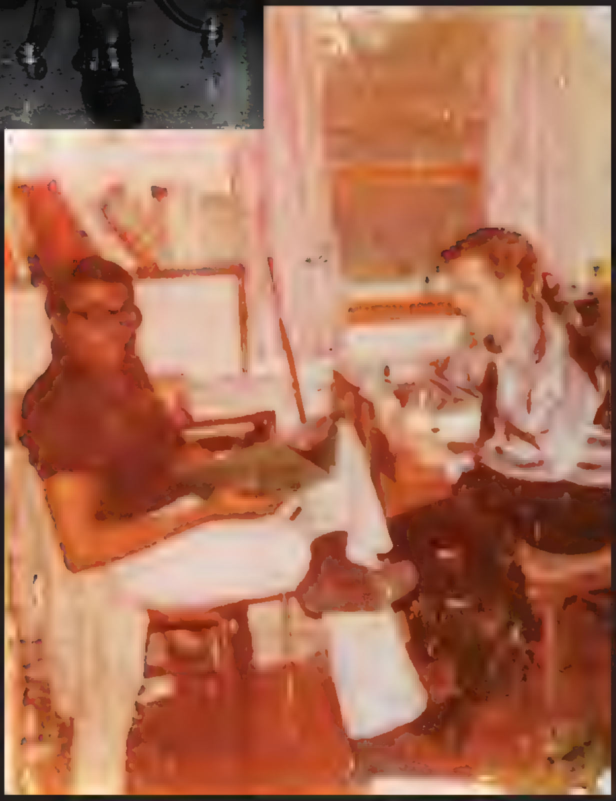
"Dragon Soldiers Marching as to War!" page 5 pencil layout photocopy
by Rich Buckler

Courtesy Don McGregor

TOP: Don McGregor strikes a pose for artist Billy Graham
BOTTOM: McGregor reviews Graham's pencil art for *Jungle Action* #19

Courtesy Don McGregor

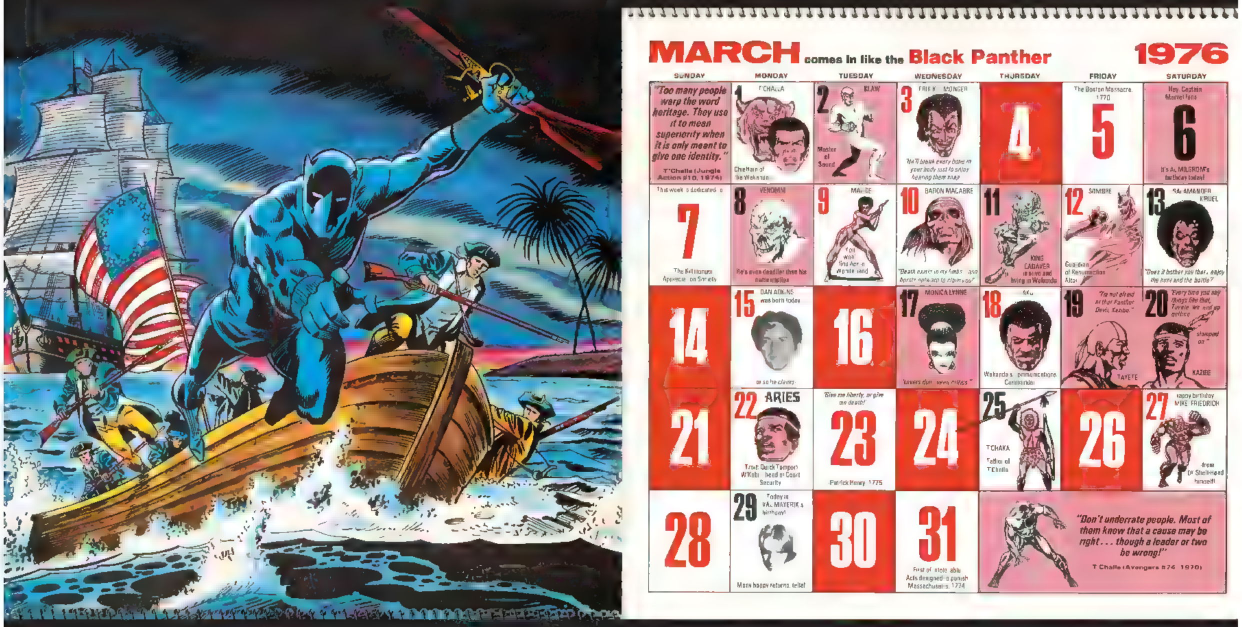
Don McGregor at the Marvel offices in the mid-1970s.



McGregor (right) and Billy Graham (left) discussing Black Panther at McGregor's Rhode Island home.

Courtesy Don McGregor

The 1976 *Mighty Marvel Calendar*, written by Tony Isabella, celebrated America's bicentennial by setting Marvel heroes in Revolutionary War contexts. The March artwork, by Bob Brown & Mike Esposito, featured the Black Panther in the March 3, 1776 naval assault on the British outpost at New Providence Island, the Bahamas.



Essential Black Panther Vol. 1 TPB (2012) cover
by Gil Kane, Frank Giacoia & Tom Chu

Reprinting *Jungle Action* #6-24 and *The Black Panther* #1-10

Black Panther Epic Collection: Panther's Rage TPB (2016) cover
by Gil Kane, Klaus Janson & Dean White

Reprinting *The Fantastic Four* #52-53 and *Jungle Action* #6-24

Black Panther: The Early Years Omnibus (2022) cover (from *Black Panther* #5, April 2016)
by Esad Ribić

COLLECTING *THE FANTASTIC FOUR* 52-53, 56 & 119, *TALES OF SUSPENSE* 97-99, *CAPTAIN AMERICA* 100, *THE AVENGERS* 52, 62, 73-74, 77-79, 87, 112 & 126, *DAREDEVIL* 52, 69 & ANNUAL 4, *ASTONISHING TALES* 6-7, *MARVEL TEAM-UP* 20, *JUNGLE ACTION* 6-24 AND MATERIAL FROM *THE FANTASTIC FOUR* 54